

BUCHANAN ON TERRORISM ■ WHERE GREENSPAN FAILED

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The American Conservative



**MAKE
WAR**

**VOTE
GOP**

**Militarism
& the
Midterm
Elections**



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CONSERVATIVE NEWS AND INFORMATION

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CONSERVATIVES HELD CAPTIVE

The range of conservative voices included in your first edition is a testament to your magazine. That said, I was surprised by some of Kevin Phillips' positions, as they are similar to the moderate attitudes that have long undermined conservatives.

In my view, Republicans have embraced the assumptions of progressives like Teddy Roosevelt, which is why traditionalists now find themselves in the wilderness.

Phillips is correct when he finds fault with the amoral corporatism pervading the Right. For years we have been faced with the false choice of commercial policy dictated by multinationals or desultory socialism. But, faced with the juggernaut of condominium capitalism, can the answer really be found in the progressivism of McCain and the big government resignation of Perot?

While all answers to economic policy may not reside with libertarians, does any traditionalist believe that government regulation has been too generous to liberty? Generally, conservatism has privileged moral order and social stability over growth rates, but it has never been an adversary of entrepreneurship.

Perhaps most perplexing, given conservatism's attachment to established moral and religious authority, is Phillips' hostility towards the Religious Right with which President Bush has supposedly formed a "cultural alliance." Bush has done little to advance such alliance. The leadership of the Religious Right has climbed aboard for nothing. It is rather Bush who has seduced religious conservatives with the promise of future influence for votes now.

Bush deviates most prominently from sober religious conservatism with his call for a war that violates just war theory and breaks with our history.

As Chesterton observed, tradition is

democratic in the best sense of the word, coming from a long, inherited common experience and practice of the people, so it would hardly do to abandon conservative populism, as Phillips seems to be suggesting in part, because of the perceived prevalence of religious traditionalists among conservatives.

DANIEL LARISON

Albuquerque, NM

TO YOUR CORNERS

The term "ethnic cleansing" was used several times in the "Kahane at the *Standard*" item in the October 21 issue. That pejorative term, a favorite of multiculturalists, should be avoided because it clouds the thinking process.

Homogeneous societies such as Japan and Sweden have very little ethnic conflict. The former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia maintained ethnic peace with police-state tactics. When they dissolved, new states formed along ethno-national lines. What's wrong with the Croats having their own state, which is essential for their self-determination?

When incompatible ethnic groups occupy the same land, only separation can advance the cause of self-preservation, self-determination, and peace. It is a worthy goal of conservatives, which multiculturalists will resist.

In pursuit of this goal, peaceful, financial-incentives are preferred over coercion. Please note, however, when a local government wants to build a highway through your house, they buy your house. But you are moved coercively, and they don't apologize. Highways are important, but so too is peace and self-determination.

The Israelis and the Palestinians are incompatible ethno-national groups. They must be separated. Each must have its own land and government. What other moral, conservative position can there be?

The U.S. should have allowed

Afghanistan to break up along ethnic lines so they can have peace and self-determination. If President Bush smashes Iraq, perhaps the silver lining will be an independent state for the Kurds. Have we forgotten that we too once demanded our own independence? And with independence, we achieved nationhood.

PERRY LORENZ

Fort Collins, CO

DAMNED BY FAINT PRAISE

"Best Behavior?" While I enjoyed the major portion of Taki's column in the debut issue I believe that he (I use his choice of words) "fumbled" when he gratuitously devoted part of his column to Ayn Rand.

To afford Ayn Rand even limited recognition was unfortunate. I recognize that Taki probably considers his reference to Rand to be, at best, faint praise. He implied as much through the description of his father's perspective of Rand: "My father...was a great admirer of Rand's, although he never adhered to her maxims.... Every form of taxation was theft, according to Ayn, something even my old man did not go along with."

But Ayn Rand does not merit mention even within a context of faint praise. The truly great minds since antiquity have addressed the same issues as Rand with exceedingly more viable conclusions. Rather than a philosophical system, Rand enunciated a personal and simplistic formula to rationalize her arrogant and greedy posture.

ALAN J. STEGMAYER

New Freedom, PA

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Iraqi Intelligence

A funny thing happened on the way to the war. President Bush had enraptured an invited crowd—if not the networks—with his “full force and fury” battle plan. Congress was primed to vote consent. Public opinion was break-

ing toward the White House, and all the president’s men looked to be lining up behind.

Then CIA Director George Tenet sent a letter to the Senate. Seems the spy chief is in possession of intelligence—a rare commodity on the Washington scene—that convinces him Saddam Hussein might indeed pass weapons of mass destruction to terrorists—but only if the U.S. strikes first.

The administration needed a missing link—proof positive that Saddam was complicit in the atrocities of 9/11. Instead it got an expert assertion that “Baghdad for now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting attacks with conventional or chemical or biological weapons.” Rather than the global threat of President Bush’s incarnation, Tenet casts the dictator as a cornered animal, fierce if provoked but unlikely to initiate aggression.

The CIA memo is not cavalier. It warns that Saddam is still in pursuit of the world’s deadliest weapons. But it makes clear that the threat to American territory, either by direct attack or terrorist delivery, is not imminent. Unless we choose to make it so.

“Iraq could decide on any given day to provide a biological or chemical weapon to a terrorist group or individual terrorists,” the president said in his Cincinnati speech. Perhaps. But Tenet ascribes far less arbitrary intent. Instead of any given day, he sees a date certain, set not by Baghdad but by President Bush.

“Should Saddam conclude that a U.S.-led attack could no longer be deterred, he probably would become much less constrained in adopting terrorist actions,” the CIA director writes. In other words, the man Bush describes as a “homicidal dictator...addicted to weapons of mass destruction” is behaving like any rational leader. He is stocking an arsenal that he will use if attacked and empty if threatened with extinction.

If logic so governs, then the time-tried constraints of containment and deterrence should be tools of choice. Countries across the globe—some friendly, others not so—possess the same weapons and have historically been corralled by diplomatic means. Saddam differs only

in that, from the ashes of his 1991 defeat, he agreed to open his cache and strip it as the victors required. He has not been forthcoming on that score, but none can argue that the inspection regime has failed, for in the last 11 years Saddam has neither acquired nuclear weapons nor deployed chemical agents. Noncompliance therefore justifies more rigorous inspections, but not invasion.

Should the president decide otherwise, over the objection of his top intelligence officer, he could make of his scant evidence a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a fight to the death, Saddam would do the things the administration deems him eventually capable of but cannot immediately prove. The pinned despot would likely vindicate the latter half of Bush’s good vs. evil dichotomy. But at what price?

After hearing Tenet’s assessment, Sen. Ron Wyden concluded, “Pursuit of a first-strike war—absent any credible sign that Saddam Hussein is preparing to wage war against our nation or other nations—will leave this nation less secure than before.”

That is President Bush’s constitutional mandate: the security of the country he leads. Not selecting which dictator next abuses the long-suffering Iraqis, or reconfiguring the balance of Middle Eastern power, or cashing in on the domestic rewards of war-making. The duty of an American president is to defend these borders and to spend our blood sparingly. This administration makes exception for itself because its professed goals have noble names like democracy and liberation. But imposing “freedom’s power” does not inoculate even a superpower against the natural consequence of tramping through a minefield. Beating despots into submission comes with just one guarantee: we will only remain good in our own eyes.

In the wake of September 11, the same voices calling for Saddam’s head claimed we were hated for our virtue. How much more will we be despised when the crusade begins in earnest? George Tenet knows. So too does Saddam Hussein, and if we ask through a hail of bombs, he will likely answer.

—The Editors

[SECURITY]

LAND OF BABEL

On the shuttle between Reagan National and La Guardia, passengers are warned before takeoff that if anyone gets up to go to washroom while in flight, the pilot will immediately divert to the nearest airport.

Regulars on these flights sometimes ponder the potential threats to their schedule posed by grandmothers with weak bladders. Last week, our correspondent saw the system in crisis mode. Fifteen minutes after leaving Reagan National, a young American man seated directly in front of him was entreating the stewardess to be allowed to go to the bathroom and meeting a firm refusal.

Several minutes later the correspondent heard the stewardess again, talking plaintively to the same young man. "We had to make an exception," she was saying, "because he doesn't speak a word of English and didn't understand anything we said in our pre-flight announcement." Our man in the air looked up to see a Chinese passenger, about thirty, being escorted back to his seat from the bathroom by a convoy of stewardesses.

Later, as rain was falling in Manhattan, the same Chinese man and a colleague skipped in front of two dozen people in the airport taxi line.

[LAW]

SUPREME LAWLESSNESS

"The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof." The Constitution is clear enough: State legislatures set the rules for Congressional elections. Somehow, the Supreme Court of New Jersey, former bench of that inventive jurist Justice Brennan, contrived to misunderstand it.

When incumbent Senator Robert Torricelli's checkered past hurt him at the polls, he quit his re-election bid, and the Democrats sought to replace him with



ex-Senator Frank Lautenberg. Trouble was, the law passed by the N.J. legislature forbids substitutions so close to election day. No trouble, said the N.J. Supremes, who unanimously allowed Lautenberg into the race, declaring that the people of New Jersey deserve a choice.

Gun-shy after 2000's theatrics, the U.S. Supreme Court must not understand the Constitution either. We don't favor federal courts dictating to the states, but here the Supreme Court should have intervened. They did not, even though the N.J. Supreme Court's fiat clearly won't let the election happen as "prescribed... by the Legislature."

Could electoral gamesmanship be the new norm, as partisan state courts help parties manage the ballot all the way to election day, knowing the Supreme Court is unlikely to weigh in? With the Senate evenly divided and judicial nominations in the balance, the N.J. Supreme Court's refusal to obey the law and the U.S. Supreme Court's failure to uphold it show how vulnerable our republic is to lawless judges.

—Howard Sutherland

[POLITICS]

KARL ROVE, CALL YOUR OFFICE

For all the *Viva Bush* campaign signs, Spanish stump speeches, and Vicente

Fox photo ops, the GOP's grand plan to attract Hispanic voters keeps coming up short. New research reveals that by a 2-to-1 margin Hispanics identify themselves as Democrats.

In the recent census, the rapidly growing Hispanic population surpassed blacks as America's largest minority, making it an object of political affection. But as long as this community remains unassimilated, it receives more in government services than it contributes in tax revenue. Consequently, liberals' ability to outpander deals Democrats the trump card. Rather than wooing with lesser gifts, Republicans would profit more by quickly converting these critical voters from Hispanics into full-fledged Americans.

[MIDDLE EAST]

IF A TREE FALLS IN THE FOREST...

At church in Manhattan last week, we were pleased to see the occasional "Peacemaking Offering" solicitation was directed toward a group called Rabbis for Human Rights, which organizes volunteers to replant the West Bank olive groves that are the lifeblood of many Palestinian villages. Initiative for our offering came from two Presbyterian churches in Pennsylvania (one in Mechanicsburg, where this magazine is printed); its organizer spoke of the importance of Israeli and American Jews getting involved alongside Palestinians, an important small part in helping to re-establish trust between the peoples who inhabit the Holy Land. The biblical quotation from Deuteronomy 20:19: "If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them," was tellingly apt.

Slightly curious was what we imagined to be the offering's concession to American interfaith relations: the solici-

tation made no mention of how these trees, so important to the economy and ecology of Palestinian villages, came to be destroyed.

[CULTURE]

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Linton Kwesi Johnson—a “pioneering reggae poet,” according to his publisher, Penguin, read out from his collection *Mi Revalveshanary Fren* at the Bristol, England Poetry Festival on October 9. Sample: “Inglan is a bitch/you bettah face up to it/dem have a likkle facktri inna Brackly/inna disya facktri all dem dhu is pack crackry.” The publisher calls the poem enriching. Just like multiculturalism.

[EMPIRE]

BUYER BEWARE

As the U.S. ramps up for regime change in Iraq, we might want to review the outcome of our latest adventure in nation-building. For all our happy talk of democratic transition, in the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, an artificial state built at a conference table in Dayton, Ohio, voters have just elected hardline nationalists rather than the Social Democrats endorsed by the international community.

When the U.S. and NATO dragged the warring factions to Dayton in 1995, they installed a tripartite presidency representing Serbs, Croats, and Muslims then committed billions of dollars to insure its staying power. But in the first locally organized elections, the Bosnians aren’t playing by our rules. All three leaders—democratically elected under careful supervision—hail from the party that plunged the region into war a decade ago.

“Unstable, ethnically fractured, and impoverished, Bosnia risks becoming a black hole in the region and a byword for the failure of international intervention to rebuild a shattered country,” the

BBC commented. Those with rosy visions for renovating Afghanistan and Iraq, take note.

[NEOCONS]

THEY’RE ALL HEGEMONISTS NOW

Exemplary in its illustration of neocon over-confidence was former *Wall Street Journal* op-ed editor Max Boot’s column in the Oct. 14 *Washington Post*. It gloated that “almost no one” had deigned to criticize the newly proclaimed Bush Doctrine, as spelled out in the White House’s National Security Strategy statement. “Get used to it,” Boot concluded. “If the non-reaction to the National Security Strategy is any indication, we’re all hegemonists now.”

Actually, the Bush document is cogently picked apart by Andrew Bacevich in this magazine and has received strongly critical reaction from, among many others, William Pfaff in the *International Herald Tribune* and Christopher Layne who, in the *Los Angeles Times* tellingly compared the new Bush doctrine to a sort of “global Department of Pre-Crime.” Boot surely disagrees with their arguments, but it is quite a stretch to simply read them out of existence—reminding one of the tyrant who insists on 99.8 percent of the vote. In showing his ignorance about what takes place outside the little parade of neoconservative hawks, Boot reveals his faction’s parochialism.

[IDEOLOGY]

BRING BACK THOSE FOLK GUITARS

In the *Boston Globe*, historian Ron Radosh provocatively wrote, “If [New Left historian William Appleman] Williams was still alive, I have no doubt he would find Buchanan and his new journal be the kind of ‘enlightened conservative’ voice he had hoped for.” ■

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Report from Fortress Washington

Has the president thought through what happens here in his own capital when he orders Gen. Tommy Franks to take Baghdad?

What raises the question is the fear and paralysis visited on this city by a single man, the Beltway Sniper, who, at this writing, is still on the loose after 11 shootings and nine kills in 13 days.

Much of the weekend's open-air activity, from high school football games to soccer games for children, was canceled. What will it be like if some Arab or Islamic regime, against which our president has repeatedly threatened preemptive war, sends half a dozen sniper-terrorists to take revenge in Washington, D.C.?

A year ago, an anthrax scare that killed half a dozen people crippled mail service and forced the evacuation of Senate office buildings, post offices, and the Supreme Court. Following 9/11, the White House and Capitol have become virtual fortresses.

Is this the price of empire? Is it worth it?

Never during World War II, when German submarines prowled the coast of Maryland and Delaware, sinking thousands of tons of shipping monthly, was Washington as buttoned-up as today. Not since the British marched down the Bladensburg road in 1814 to burn the White House has our capital seemed so vulnerable.

Recent weeks have also taught us the cost of our having embraced global free trade and international interdependence.

After West Coast shippers locked out 10,500 dock workers, the president was forced to invoke Taft-Hartley for the

first time since Nixon intervened to halt a longshoreman strike during Vietnam. Reopening the 29 ports on the West Coast, said Mr. Bush, was "vital to our economy and to our military."

Why vital? Because U.S. factories are more dependent on imports to maintain production today than they have been since before the Jacksonian era. Factories had already begun shutting down and thousands of workers had been idled. Retailers, too, were clamoring for Bush to intervene, as half the goods on store shelves at Christmas are no longer Made in the U.S.A.

Tens of millions of tons of this cargo enter U.S. ports each year in millions of truck-sized containers that have lately been found to conceal terrorists. One dirty bomb, one anthrax bomb, one bomb containing poison gas in one of these containers, and the ports of both coasts and the Gulf would be paralyzed. The same holds for the thousands of trucks that daily roll into this country from Mexico and that privileged sanctuary of international terrorists, Canada.

Not once, however, from 1941-1945 did Yamamoto's fleets or Doenitz's submarines force a closure of the U.S. factories that were producing the tanks, guns, planes, vehicles, ships, and munitions that enabled the Allies to crush the Axis powers in less than four years.

How did America become so vulnerable? A large share of the culpability rests with self-styled conservatives.

The open-borders, ally-ally-in-free immigration policy championed by the

Wall Street Journal has left us, on this eve of war, with ten million illegal aliens wandering around the country. Some 300,000 have defied deportation orders for various crimes and disappeared into our midst.

Conservatives, too, threw out the America First trade policy that made the GOP "America's Party" for 70 years and ours the most self-sufficient nation on earth. Then they grafted onto the GOP a Wilsonian-free-trade-*uber-alles* ideology that has left us dependent on imports for our prosperity and security.

Instead of abandoning Cold War relics like NATO and pulling up the trip wires of war laid down by Acheson and Dulles after the Soviet empire expired, we began launching wars and intervening in lands from Panama to Haiti to Somalia to Kuwait to Bosnia to Kosovo, then stationed thousands of U.S. troops on the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia.

On September 11 came blowback.

Now, to make America safe from a terrorism provoked by our own mindless interventions, we have decided to "liberate" Iraq, with Ariel Sharon as our role model. Ought we not we not first ask ourselves how Sharon's invasion of Lebanon turned out, and how his occupation of the West Bank has made his own country more secure?

Or should we wait until Washington is as exciting as Jerusalem?

Congress has now capitulated and surrendered its power to make war to Mr. Bush. So we are likely going to war. But when the cheering stops and U.S. soldiers shot in the back in occupied Baghdad are brought home to Dover AFB, hopefully, we will settle accounts with those who sacrificed God's Country on their pagan altar of empire. ■

Militarism & the Midterm Elections

White House strategists timed the Iraq war debate to dominate the fall Congressional campaign.

By Martin Sieff

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT George W. Bush spent the weekend of Oct. 5-6 at his parents' family compound in Kennebunkport, Maine working on the speech he would give Monday, Oct. 7 in Cincinnati to rally the American people to his crusade to topple Saddam Hussein. Yet, strangely, he did not surround himself with any Pentagon generals or intelligence chiefs, or even his favorite pet chicken hawks—the armchair warriors at the Department of Defense.

No, Bush crafted that speech with two men: his White House chief of staff Andrew Card and his long-time political Svengali, Karl Rove. It was they who flew back with him.

The president's choice of domestic political advisers by his side as he crafted a crucial trumpet call to a major conflict was revealing. There was no hint of domestic considerations in the crisp, precisely 30-minute, no-nonsense speech Bush gave to tighten the screws on the dictator of Iraq. And as in his speech to the assembled houses of Congress after the 9/11 terror attacks and in his State of the Union message at the beginning of the year, Bush was at his best. He was restrained, dignified, sober,

the kind of salesman you would expect to have Yale and Harvard Business School degrees and from whom you would certainly buy that creaky used car with the dubious brakes.

It was Bush's second major address on Iraq in less than four weeks. He had said virtually the same things to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 12. And his steady, relentless drum-

beat of rhetoric was having its effect. On Monday, Oct. 7—the same day the president gave his Cincinnati speech and exactly one year after he launched U.S. military operations in Afghanistan—his most embarrassing congressional hold-out, retiring House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas, finally signed on to the president's mission.

Bush subsequently received a Con-



KEVIN TUMA

gressional fig leaf, his very own Gulf of Tonkin resolution well within the time period he demanded—just before the midterm congressional elections. But not too early to give people time to have second thoughts about the bold martial Sousa brass band marches he was conducting.

It was a far cry from the dog days of August. Curiously enough, the desperate urgency about moving rapidly against Iraq that Bush expressed to the American people in October was not evident from anything he said or did only two months before. But, then, the height of the summer holiday season is not the time to sell a policy to the American people, especially when it involves unleashing full-scale war.

As soon as September arrived and the kids went back to school, however, Bush hit high gear. Simultaneously, in both on the record statements and impeccably choreographed remarks attributed as usual to “senior administration officials,” the president and his top lieutenants launched his two-front diplomatic offensive. Its purpose was clear: to persuade, bully, and browbeat the two institutions they had treated with simultaneous contempt—the United Nations and the United States Congress—into giving them *carte blanche* for the war with Iraq.

To both the UN and Congress, Bush sounded a note of absolute urgency. The crucial approval had to be given by the beginning of October. National security was at stake. There was not a minute to lose. The longer those contemptible, spineless Democrats and those selfish, isolationist Republicans prevaricated and fiddled, the more likely Washington or New York City would burn when Saddam Hussein struck first. The administration had to have the Congressional green light it needed for political cover before it moved against Iraq. And it had to have it by early October. But hold a

minute, why now? Why the beginning of October? And, for that matter, why Iraq?

At least 10,000 al-Qaeda terrorists who escaped the administration's two entirely bungled military operations to net them at Torā Bora late last year and in Operation Anaconda afterwards remain snug and secure in our gallantly Pakistan. Occasional teaspoonfuls of them—two or three obscure young thugs at a time—are hauled up before local courts to keep an easily satisfied Bush administration happy.

U.S. intelligence officials affirm—and serious mainstream news reports concur—that there are now far more al-Qaeda activists camped out in eastern Iran than there are in neighboring Iraq. And it was, after all, al-Qaeda that attacked us on 9/11. So why this over-

he were finally backed into a corner with nothing to lose.

Also, even if a war against Saddam is necessary and inevitable, why rush through the clearance in early October if war is not to start until January? For almost all reputable military authorities and analysts concur that the combination of weather conditions in the Iraqi desert and the surprisingly cold mountains of its far north would be best for large-scale U.S. military operations starting in January as was the case in the 1991 Gulf War.

There is a window of opportunity in October, when the desert has got colder and before the heavy rains come in the far north, with potential to immobilize or slow down heavy armor operations. But this window is short and closes quickly.

WHY THE BEGINNING OF OCTOBER? AND FOR THAT MATTER, WHY IRAQ?

riding obsession to get the go-ahead to invade Iraq instead? And why now?

If it were obviously a matter of national security, the answer would be clear. If Iraq were literally days or weeks away from having a nuclear weapon or plotting to annihilate millions of Americans with it, such haste would not just be justified, it would be mandatory. But absolutely none of the confidential briefings that senators and congressmen have received has alleged any such thing. On the contrary, the president and his spokesmen have recently de-linked Iraq from close ties with al-Qaeda or plotting the 9/11 atrocities. And they have not given a single senator or congressman a nugget of hard intelligence that we must launch operations against Saddam in October or before the end of the year or he will have, or will have unleashed, new hell weapons upon us. On the contrary, the surest guarantee that he will deploy smallpox or nuclear weapons would be if

Senior generals and staff officers know this, which is why they are reluctant to rush into attacking at such a time. And it may even be that their counsels of caution have prevailed upon the civilian hawks running the Pentagon.

It may, of course, also be that their counsels will be overruled and that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz will insist on celebrating the 40th anniversary of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis by launching a full-scale Middle East war. But why choose October? And if they are indeed prepared to wait until January at least, then why insist on getting the Congressional approval rubber-stamped by the early part of that month?

Millions of American voters will get their third quarter 401K statements in mid to late October, close enough to the November elections that they will remember the dire bottom line results. For the American public has seen an

almost 25% collapse in the Dow Jones industrial average since President George W. Bush took office. Voters have watched his administration convert the \$100 billion budgetary surpluses it inherited into a \$150 billion deficit in less than two years. Add Enron, WorldCom, and other major financial scandals and ominous rising unemployment that now tops 400,000. Yet the president's personal approval ratings remain securely in the 70% range. And the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* both concluded in Page A1 national political analyses during the first week of October that the struggle for control of both houses of Congress in the November elections was too close to call. How could that be?

As long as domestic issues were dominating news coverage and political battles over the summer, Bush and his Republicans lost ground. But lo and behold! Though there have been no new terrorist attacks or credible indications of imminent threat, since the beginning of September national security issues have been back in the driver's seat. And it is Iraq, not al-Qaeda that is driving.

Does that mean that nothing more than short-term political ambition is propelling the focus on Iraq? Is the Iraqi threat nonexistent? Or will the administration leash its dogs of war and send them back to their kennels once the election is done and snoopy Democrats have been safely kept off the chairmanships of key House committees? For otherwise they might ask embarrassing questions about Vice President Dick Cheney's dealings at Haliburton, or how close the president's ties to Enron's Kenneth Lay really were.

The megalomaniacal obsession with cleaning the face of the Middle East and its 280 million Arabs, whether they want it or not, has intoxicated the DOD's masters beyond reason. Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice have swallowed it

neat and uncut too. But that does not mean Bush and Karl Rove do not have other more "practical" considerations high on their agenda.

For the taunt that Republican critics threw—correctly—at President Bill Clinton is also true of this Republican president who seems inclined to subordinate foreign policy principles to his domestic political needs.

Indeed, the accusation is now true in far more serious ways. Clinton, for all his do-gooding and internationalizing, was admirably sound on two crucial principles. He was determined to keep the United States out of any war likely to have serious casualties, and he recognized that maintaining good or at least defused relations with Russia, China, and the major nations of the Arab world was essential to fulfil that end. By contrast, Bush has given free rein to the most reckless and irresponsible policymakers at DOD while politically castrating his cautious secretary of state, Colin Powell.

In the short term, this policy has proven politically advantageous for Bush. At a stroke, he and Rove have forced the Democrats to play on a field where they have been whipped in every major game for the past 35 years. As former Colorado Sen. Gary Hart wrote in an op-ed in the *New York Times* Oct. 3, "Once again the Democratic Party finds itself on the defense about defense. Congressional Democrats are responding to a Republican president's initiative, this time." And Hart succinctly and entirely accurately concluded, "This issue could well decide the Congressional balance of power, propelling Republicans to victory in both the House and the Senate in the upcoming midterm elections."

When viewed from this perspective, the urgency with which the administration has pursued the Iraq issue becomes all too explicable. Bush, Rumsfeld, and Rove appear intent on proving to future

generations just how wise James Madison and the other Founding Fathers were when they insisted that the war-making power reside in Congress and not in the Executive—a position for which this administration has shown repeated and open contempt. Jefferson, Madison, and many of their great contemporaries were convinced that American heads of state and the officials loyal to and dependent upon them were no more inherently virtuous or incorruptible than those of Old Europe. (Their philosophical position, incidentally, was entirely antithetical to the triumphal American particularism of our current neocons.)

The American people see before them the spectacle of an administration that has failed in all its major domestic policies and abandoned traditional Republican principles on far too many issues. (One could list maintaining effective immigration controls, a balanced budget, general fiscal prudence, a commitment to full civil liberties, and cultural assimilation of millions of new immigrants.) Instead, the administration is campaigning to sustain and increase its power on a policy of international adventurism, new radical preemptive military strategies, and a hunger for a politically convenient and perfectly timed confrontation with Iraq.

Lyndon Johnson demanded his infamous 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution before his own landslide election victory—won in large part by demonizing Barry Goldwater for reckless policies that Johnson himself was to implement. Many Americans soon regretted that result as tens of thousands of body bags started coming home. Now LBJ's ghost must be looking down on his fellow Texan, Bush 43—and laughing that harsh old hill-billy laugh. ■

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Bush's Grand Strategy

The administration apparently believes we cannot be free and prosperous without solving every problem everywhere, chiefly by armed force.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

ALL BUT LOST amidst the heated talk of regime change in Baghdad, the White House in late September issued the Bush administration's *U.S. National Security Strategy*. In one sense, publication of this document is a routine event, just one more periodic report mandated by Congress. Yet this latest rendering of U.S. grand strategy—the first to appear since 9/11—deserves far greater attention than it has received.

The Bush *USNSS* offers the most comprehensive statement to date of America's globe-straddling post-Cold War ambitions. In it, the administration makes plain both its intention to perpetuate American military supremacy and its willingness—almost approaching eagerness—to use force to reshape the international order. This new strategy places the approaching showdown with Saddam Hussein in a far wider context, showing that overthrowing the Iraqi dictator is only the next step in a massive project, pursued under the guise of the “war on terror,” but aimed ultimately at remaking the world in our image.

Calling back into service a phrase first employed by candidate Bush, the *USNSS* propounds what it refers to as “a distinctly American internationalism.” When George W. Bush used that phrase on the campaign trail, it was devoid of content. Here it takes on meaning, at

once grandiose and combustible.

The Bush strategy does qualify as truly distinctive in one specific sense: its fusion of breathtaking utopianism with barely disguised *machtpolitik*. It reads as if it were the product not of sober, ostensibly conservative Republicans but of an unlikely collaboration between Woodrow Wilson and the elder Field Marshal von Moltke.

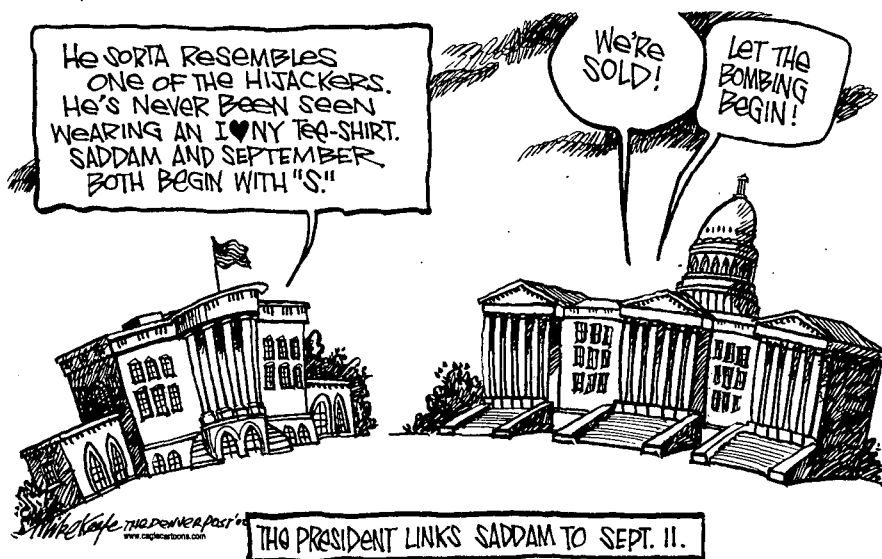
On the one hand, the document rings with assurances affirming the inevitable triumph of liberty around the world. America's “great mission,” President Bush writes in the document's introduction, is to hasten this triumph, by “extend[ing] the benefits of freedom across the globe.” Fulfilling that mission obliges the United States to assume responsibility for eliminating the obstacles to freedom everywhere: war and terror, poverty and disease, “the clashing wills of powerful states and the evil designs of tyrants.”

But America's mission has a positive as well as a negative aspect. Fulfilling it requires not only removing obstacles but also creating a new global order conducive to freedom. When it comes to identifying the principles around which to organize that order, George W. Bush harbors no doubts. Like his predecessor Bill Clinton, he is certain that the United States has deciphered the deepest

secrets of history and understands its direction and purpose. There is, he declares, only “a single sustainable model for national success,” one to which all people aspire and to which all societies must ultimately conform. That model is ours.

Democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech and worship, respect for private property and for the rights of women and minorities: these comprise the “nonnegotiable demands of human dignity.” (Regarding rights of the unborn, the *USNSS* is silent.) But beyond those principles, the quality that will bind the world together and bring Utopia within reach is “openness.” In an increasingly interdependent world, one in which “the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is diminishing,” nations—including this nation—have no choice but to “be open to people, ideas, and goods from across the globe.”

In an open and integrated world—achieved in the first instance by removing impediments to trade and investment—all things become possible. Without openness, material abundance for those who currently enjoy it becomes unsustainable and for those who yearn for it remains beyond reach. Here too Bush echoes the views of Bill Clinton who based his foreign policy on



the conviction that an "open world" knit together by the forces of globalization offered a sure-fire formula for limitless prosperity, universal freedom, and perpetual peace.

The Johnny Appleseed of globalization, Clinton spent eight years travelling the world, extolling the benefits of openness and exuding good cheer, no doubt expecting peace and prosperity to spring up wherever he trod. But events in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, the Balkans, and elsewhere showed such expectations to be illusory. To these indicators that openness might not be quite the panacea that its advocates claimed, Clinton responded by resorting to force, usually belatedly, almost always indecisively, but with remarkable frequency.

Throughout the Clinton era, U.S. military forces marched hither and yon, intervening in a wider variety of places, for a wider variety of purposes than at any time in our history. More often than not, once the troops arrived, they stayed. As a result, by the time that Clinton left office in 2001, the defining fact of international politics—albeit one vigorously denied by the outgoing administration—had become not openness and

not globalization but the emergence of a Pax Americana.

Bringing into office a greater affinity for exercising power and a pronounced belief in the efficacy of coercion—both reinforced by the chastening experience of 9/11—senior members of the Bush administration do not share Bill Clinton's ambivalence about American military might. Hence, the second major theme of the new *U.S. National Security Strategy*—a candid acknowledgment and endorsement of the progressively greater militarization of U.S. foreign policy.

To state the point bluntly, the Bush administration no longer views force as the last resort; rather, it considers military power to be America's most effective instrument of statecraft—the area in which the United States owns the greatest advantage. Beginning with the premise that "our best defense is a good offense," the *USNSS* describes how President Bush intends to exploit that advantage to the fullest.

He will do so in two ways. First, he will expand U.S. global power projection capabilities. Already spending roughly as much on defense as the entire rest of the world combined, the

United States will spend still more—much, much more. The purpose of this increase is not to respond to any proximate threat. Rather, the Bush administration is boosting the Pentagon's budget with an eye toward achieving a margin of such unprecedented and unsurpassed superiority that no would-be adversary will even consider mounting a future challenge. The United States will thereby secure in perpetuity its status as sole superpower. Old concerns about the "clashing wills of powerful states" will disappear; henceforth, a single power will call the tune.

Second, with the *USNSS* codifying the concept of "anticipatory self-defense," President Bush claims for the United States the prerogative of using force preemptively and unilaterally, however its interests may dictate. (That prerogative belongs exclusively to the United States: the Bush strategy pointedly warns other nations not to "use preemption as a pretext for aggression.") In contrast to his predecessor's reactive, half-hearted military adventures, Bush will employ America's armed might proactively and on a scale sufficient to achieve rapid, decisive results. The prospect of ever greater U.S. military activism—against terrorists, against rogue states, against evildoers of whatever stripe—beckons.

Nowhere does the Bush administration's national security strategy pause to consider whether the nation's means are adequate to the "great mission" to which destiny has ostensibly summoned the United States. Asserting that American global hegemony is necessarily benign and that Washington can be counted on to use the Bush Doctrine of preemption judiciously, nowhere does it contemplate the possibility that others might take a contrary view. Nowhere does it tally up the costs of shouldering an ever-expanding array of military commitments that flow from

efforts to police the world. Nowhere does it convey any awareness that America's power and the world's plasticity may each have limits. Nowhere does it even speculate on when the United States might be able to lay down its imperial burdens and become a normal nation. Indeed, in all likelihood, the zealots who crafted this strategy have no interest in such matters.

The Bush administration's grand strategy reeks of hubris. Yet one may also detect in its saber-rattling occasional notes of desperation. America today is, by any measure, the most powerful nation on earth, enjoying a level of mastery that may exceed that of any great power or any previous empire in all of history. Yet to judge by this extraordinary document, we cannot rest easy, we cannot guarantee our freedom or our prosperity until we have solved every problem everywhere, relying chiefly on armed force to do so. In the end, we have little real choice—as the similarities between this new strategy and the Clinton strategy that Republicans once denounced with such gusto attest. In truth, whatever their party affiliation or ideological disposition, members of the so-called foreign policy elite cannot conceive of an alternative to “global leadership”—the preferred euphemism for global empire.

“In the new world that we have entered,” George W. Bush writes, “the only path to peace and security is the path of action.” So we must press on, with vigor and determination. Following our president, we must charge down that path until we drop from exhaustion or fling ourselves off the precipice fashioned of our own arrogance. ■

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Banking on the Bubble

As share values swelled to absurd levels, who turned off the alarms?

By Robertson Morrow

BEGINNING IN 1996, a Great Bubble grew and then burst, stripping \$8 trillion of apparent wealth from American markets. Corporate management, investment bankers, accountants, and investors have all been named suspects. But in the end, responsibility lands squarely on our federal government, which is uniquely positioned and ultimately accountable for preventing what happened.

Bubbles Before

AN ECONOMIC BUBBLE is a time of unsustainable prosperity in which the rapid creation of money, credit, and debt fuels even more rapid rises of stock prices, asset values, and spending. Wealth appears to be created, leading the public to buy and to spend more, thus creating further rises in stock prices, asset values, and spending. Financial promoters leverage these rising values to create even more money, credit, and debt. And so on. The spiral escalates until investors are no longer willing to pay higher prices. The bubble then bursts, and the whole scheme collapses.

The first economic bubble so christened—the exotically named South Sea Bubble—occurred in early 18th century England after the South Sea Company gained a monopoly on Britain's trade with South America. The London-based

company had far more success with financial engineering than with trade. Think Enron. Essentially, the company was able to pawn off government debt as a good stock investment. Think Wall Street analysts. South Sea stock rocketed then crashed. It opened 1720 at £128, rose 800% by June, and then plummeted back by December. Think NASDAQ. The South Sea Company spawned 120 imitators in 1720 alone, offering dubious paper securities to the public. Think IPO craze. Parliament passed the Bubble Act of 1720 banning all new private companies not under the control of the government, retarding British economic development for fifty years. Think Congress.

The most infamous American bubble was the 1920s New Era bubble. Driven by a belief that new technology—the automobile, the electric motor, the radio—had created a “New Era” in which the old rules of investing no longer applied, Americans adjusted their spending to their new wealth, buying stocks and homes on credit with abandon. In 1923, the Dow stood at 99. By August 1929, it had risen 400% to close at 380, but by 1932, fell almost 90% to 41.

By 1933, the economy had contracted by one-third, and unemployment reached 25%. The Great Depression was on, and because of its severity, an almost universal consensus emerged

among American elites: Future bubbles must be punctured by the Federal Reserve early in their development.

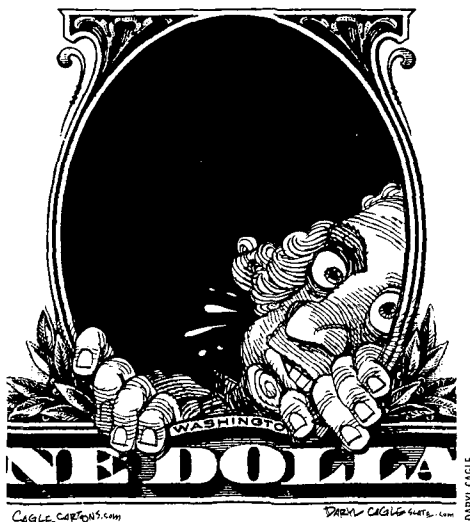
The Economics of Bubbles

A BUBBLE DOES all of its significant damage toward its end, not at its beginning. Three factors are responsible: (1) investing too much money in one sector of the economy and not enough in others; (2) spending too much based on the illusion of wealth; and (3) destruction of financial institutions caused by too many bad loans. Early phases of a bubble are almost indistinguishable from normal market fluctuations, and the damage is limited. But once a bubble develops, all the incremental investment and spending is waste. The longer it continues, the greater the damage. Therefore, once a bubble has clearly formed, the only rational policy is to pop it immediately.

The Federal Reserve is the instrument the modern economy uses to burst emerging bubbles by halting or even reversing monetary expansion by slamming on the economic brakes. It can hike short-term credit rates. It can increase stock margin requirements. It can use the bully pulpit. In the words of former Federal Reserve Chairman William McChesney Martin: "The job of the Federal Reserve is to take away the punch bowl just when the party starts getting interesting."

The purpose for establishing the Federal Reserve in 1913, with its monopoly on printing money, was to guard against turbulence perceived to arise from a system of private banking. Perhaps, as some libertarians argue, this monopoly is a bad idea, but it is the law.

In the post-war era, no one believed that America would ever suffer another bubble because of faith in the Federal Reserve's sense of duty and integrity. Certain sectors of the American econ-



omy might go through mini-bubbles and subsequent meltdowns. But the idea that America as a whole might suffer a massive bubble was not something serious people worried about. Yet it happened, starting around December 1996.

The Early Bubble

DECEMBER 5, 1996 marks the start of the modern bubble, for on that date, Alan Greenspan gave his famous speech warning of the "irrational exuberance" of the stock market. But a clear sign that a bubble was coming occurred the year before. On August 9, 1995, a year-old company with no profits and little revenue made its IPO. Netscape went public at \$28 per share and shot upward all day to close at \$58, worth over \$2 billion. Netscape CEO Jim Clark's secretary, who knew nothing about stock options before joining the company, ended the day worth over \$1 million. She retired two years later.

By late 1996, the S&P 500 index, the broadest and most representative measure of big company stock values had topped 750. It was selling for 20 times earnings, a very high ratio in a strong economy. Stock prices had almost doubled in the five preceding years.

It was time for the Fed to take away the punchbowl. Instead, as Morgan

Stanley chief economist Stephen Roach said, "the Fed squandered the opportunity to pop the equity bubble in late 1996 and early 1997." Worse, "an 'irrationally exuberant' equity bubble was suddenly rationalized by a Fed that embraced the New Economy with open arms."

By early summer 1998, the S&P 500 had risen by 60% to 1,200, and the bubble spread to Asian stock markets. In August, however, financial markets in Asia (excluding Japan) began to crack—falling 50% or more in a matter of months. The Asia crisis put a number of U.S.-based financial speculators at risk, most infamously Long Term Capital Management. U.S. markets retreated 15%, but the S&P 500 still hovered around 1000, one-third higher than the irrationally exuberant levels of two years before.

The Federal Reserve faced a choice: it could let the markets do what the Fed itself should have done in early 1997—deflate the U.S. bubble—or it could bail out global interests in Asia and Wall Street. It chose the latter.

In an unprecedented move, the Fed summoned major Wall Street investment banks to its New York offices to arrange a bailout of Long Term Capital Management, and on September 27, 1998 announced a bailout plan. The next day, it began the first of three rapid rates cuts. The markets got the message: "Don't fight the Fed." The early bubble was over, and the mania began.

The Mania

FOR TWO YEARS after the Long Term bailout, speculation in stocks became an American obsession. The S&P index eventually topped 1,500, more than 50% higher than October 1998, double December 1996, and four times higher than the early 1990s. By every relevant measure, the stock market was wildly overvalued during the mania, more so than at any other peak in its history, including the

1929 peak before the Depression.

The Internet bubble became a great speculative craze. *Fortune's* June 9, 1999 cover promoted: "Net Stock Rules. Those wild Internet valuations change the whole game. Managers and investors: Ignore them at your peril." The Internet bubble peaked as early as December 1999 and burst the week of the great NASDAQ decline, April 10–14, 2000.

The much bigger telecommunications and technology bubble had not burst, however. Investors burned on Internet stocks poured money into seemingly solid stocks. On September 1, 2000, the NASDAQ reached 4220—triple the irrationally exuberant levels of December 1996. Many of the bigger tech stocks, like the "Four Horsemen" of Cisco, Oracle, Sun, and EMC, hit all-time highs. Stock valuations were absurd. The 100 largest NASDAQ companies were worth over \$5 trillion, yet they made less than 1/200th of that in income.

The great market players of the late 20th century—Warren Buffet, Julian Robertson, George Soros, John Templeton—warned of a stock market bubble. At the April 2000 Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting, Buffett cautioned: "If you are very early in a chain letter, you can make money, but there's no money created." Templeton observed to the *Miami Herald*, "This is the most dangerous period in financial history." But no one cared about history, and the warnings of veteran investors went unheeded. By late 2000, the bubble in telecommunications and technology stocks finally burst. The NASDAQ declined to 2500 as technology budgets contracted across corporate America. The mania was over.

The Late Bubble

THE ECONOMY NOW needed a deep, painful recession to purge the excesses of the Great Bubble. Both consumers and government had overspent, and the nor-

mal purge of a boom's excesses includes repayment of debt and curtailment in the growth of government spending.

Beginning on January 3, 2001, however, the Federal Reserve took the opposite course. That year witnessed an unprecedented 11 short-term rate cuts, reducing rates from 6.5% to 1.75%.

These rate cuts did nothing to help telecommunications and technology companies. Excluding the Bells, most telecommunications companies went bankrupt, shedding 300,000 jobs. Capital spending on technology declined precipitously, and recession hit the U.S.

Rate cuts shifted the Great Bubble from telecommunications and technology to the consumer. Despite a worsening job market and the damage to mania stocks, Americans kept spending and taking on more debt faster than their incomes grew, and government spending continued to outpace inflation. Employees at soon-to-be-bankrupt companies such as Enron and WorldCom remained optimistic.

In mid-2001, as recession hit, the stock market wobbled. From April to September, the S&P 500 fell 30%, but September 11th masked the downturn. Easy victory in Afghanistan and no further acts of mass terrorism reassured Americans. By March 2002, most believed that we had conquered the recession. Magazines and newspapers headlined the triumph, and the Dow reached almost 10,600, just 10% off its January 2000 peak. But the victory was an illusion based on foreign money. In April 2002, the dollar began to break, falling more than 15% in four months, and the stock market followed the dollar down. By July 2002, the market had lost almost 30%, and Americans began to turn pessimistic. The late bubble was over.

Aftermath

THE GREAT BUBBLE has left the American economy saddled with at least

three major burdens:

- Consumer and corporate debt now totals \$9.5 trillion and \$4.3 trillion respectively, double the levels of a decade ago.
- America's trade deficit now exceeds \$400 billion per year, triple the levels of a decade ago. Because American companies are so uncompetitive in selling abroad, Goldman Sachs estimates that a 43% decline in the dollar would merely cut the trade deficit in half.
- In the 1990's, government spending at all levels rose from less than \$2 trillion in 1991 to over \$3 trillion in 2001.

Turning Off the Alarms

AS IN ANY LARGE-SCALE disaster, a critical question is, who turned off the alarms?

The simplest answer is Alan Greenspan and his cheerleaders in government, the media, and on Wall Street. Greenspan never believed that "the job of the Federal Reserve is to take away the punchbowl just when the party gets interesting." Just the opposite. Greenspan thinks his job is to spike the punchbowl when the party dies down.

There are other answers as well. The accounting system should have sounded an alarm, but many companies simply lied about their profits. The culture of "everybody-does-it" dishonesty, endorsed by the Senate on the day it acquitted President Clinton, resulted in the worst outbreak of accounting fraud since at least the 1920s.

During the Great Bubble, wage inflation, another alarm, was suppressed by mass immigration, as importation of foreign workers to the United States doubled in the 1990s. In the long-term, wage inflation means raises for American workers, a good thing. In the short-term, excess wage inflation acts as a self-correcting mechanism to stop bubbles: as workers become too expensive, compa-

nies stop hiring.

Instead of worrying about how to puncture the bubble, Alan Greenspan focused on increasing immigration to keep wages down. In his January 2000 testimony to Congress, Greenspan said, "Aggregate demand is putting very significant pressures on an ever-decreasing available supply of unemployed labor. The one obvious means that one can use to offset that is expanding the number of people we allow in. Reviewing our immigration laws in the context of the type of economy which we will be enjoying in the decade ahead is clearly on the table..."

One alarm did go off: the trade deficit, which during the Great Bubble more than doubled, but this alarm was ignored.

The trade deficit rose throughout the early bubble and, starting during the mania, exploded off the charts. For the years 1999–2001, the cumulative trade deficit was \$1 trillion. Adjusted for inflation, the trade deficit had tripled in 7 years and remains at record levels.

AMERICANS FACILITATED the Great Bubble because they enjoyed their apparent prosperity too much to consider the long-term consequences of their borrowing. The market did no better, because markets are no smarter than the people who run them, and the people who ran them were drunk on cash. The mechanism designed to incorporate these insights, the Fed's traditional duty to pop bubbles, was abandoned owing to a cult-like faith in a "New Economy," a belief intimately connected to globalist ideology. Both share a central myth: old-fashioned specifics like location, nation, politics, culture, and character no longer matter. With the bursting of the Great Bubble, they could return. ■

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Flight From Honesty

Forty years ago, journalists were freer to seek the truth.

By Mark Gauvreau Judge

IT IS AN ALTOGETHER remarkable passage from an altogether remarkable book:

In committee hearing after committee hearing, Negroes have been singled out as statistically responsible for crime in Washington. It is a matter of record that Negroes *do* commit the greatest number of serious crimes, and they commit them far out of proportion to their percentage of the population. The figures of homicide, rape, robbery, assault, housebreaking, and larceny tell the same story: most of the crimes are committed by Negroes.

In our contemporary political and social climate, when political correctness has corrupted much of journalism and prevents many writers from offering such statistics, this blunt language must come across like belching during Mass. To mention disparate crime rates between races is to invite accusations of racism and to be both drummed out of polite society and dropped from the aerie of mainstream journalism. Yet most remarkable is how the above quotation illustrates the corruption of not only a generation of reporters but of a single reporter within his generation.

The quote comes from a book called *Dusk at the Mountain: The Negro, the Nation, and the Capital—A Report on Problems and Progress*. It was published in 1963 and was written by Haynes John-

son, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former *Washington Post* reporter. Johnson writes thick bestsellers with portentous titles like *Sleeping Through History: America in the Reagan Years* and, most recently, *The Best of Times: America in the Clinton Years*.

Johnson's later books are dull dilations on American society: he goes around the country interviewing folks, then reports what he finds. His conclusions are always the same: America needs to make progress, always in a liberal direction. Yet in comparing these books to *Dusk at the Mountain*, it is obvious that something odd has happened to Johnson and perhaps the entire journalism industry. Either there are no more conservatives or traditionalists in the United States, or Johnson has simply stopped interviewing them.

I found *Dusk at the Mountain* while researching an article on Shaw, a predominantly black neighborhood in Washington. Shaw is to the District what Harlem is to New York, a place with a long and proud African-American history. In the 1920s, it was the home to over 300 black-owned businesses as well as Howard University, one of the oldest and proudest black colleges.

All of this began to change in the early 1960s, when crime and illegitimacy began to rise in correlation with the breakdown of the black family. My article set out to prove that the 1968 riots in Washington following the murder of

Martin Luther King had nothing to do with the assassination, but that black revolutionaries combined with broken homes and juvenile delinquency to cause the fires and looting.

In the beginning of his book, Johnson flatly declares himself "a moderate liberal." I had to remind myself that in 1963, journalists were more honest, the dogma of "objectivity" had not taken hold, and being a liberal was not cause for embarrassment. But even more shocking, Johnson then, as opposed to Johnson now, was not afraid to make moral judgments and to print a quote even when it indicated serious pathology—or strong approval of traditional values or whites—on the part of blacks. *Dusk at the Mountain* was written when American liberalism was at its best, capable of taking on racism and economic inequality while challenging the excuses of the criminal underclass. How the world, and Johnson's journalism, has changed.

Dusk is a book of remarkable honesty and power. It offers a compelling snapshot of Shaw in the years between the urban renewal fiasco of the 1950s that displaced thousands of blacks, moving the poor and criminal underclass into middle- and upper-class enclaves like Shaw, and the riots that were to come. It also offers some quotes that I doubt would make it into any reporter's notebook today—Johnson's included. (In a wonderful review of Johnson's last book in the *Washington Post*, *Weekly Standard* editor Christopher Caldwell pointed out that these days Johnson just does not interview anyone with whom he does not agree.)

In a chapter entitled "The World of Welfare," Johnson visits Bates Street in the heart of Shaw. There he meets "a prominent Negro businessman" who tells the reporter how a typical welfare case works. A black laborer loses his job. On the way home he gets drunk, then loses what little money he has left in a crap game. Unable

to support his wife and kids, he decides, against his will, to leave home so he can collect \$260 a month on welfare. He still lives at home, however, returning at night to see his family. He soon fathers another child with his wife, but the child is now illegitimate. The welfare agency expects fraud and investigates, really causing the father to leave this time. The mother then finds another man and has another illegitimate child. As the black businessman told Johnson, "Their father didn't want to go away, but the white man made him."

It is unlikely that such a story would make it into the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* today. The reporter simply would not report it. Johnson does, and even goes further. He offers a passage that would make jaws drop if it came up on any contemporary editor's computer screen:

For the present, welfare continues to place an increasing economic burden on all taxpayers. But the economic load is only one of the problems. More important is what happens to the people affected. Too often, those who write about welfare seem to be governed by their hearts instead of their heads. In some of these accounts, one gets the impression that people on relief are all noble, long-suffering characters. This attitude seems to be held even by some who are professional social workers.

In my experience, many welfare recipients do not wish to get off the rolls. They have found they can live better on relief than off. To such people, subsidies are placing a premium on laziness. And relief is not helping the children who have no values, who have heard the word "Jesus Christ" only as a form of profanity.

I am not advocating [a moral test for welfare recipients]. Noth-

ing good can come of taking men off relief unless they are given opportunities for improvement... [but] welfare deadens incentive. Long before the latest furor about welfare chiselers, Negroes in Washington were critical of these in their race who clung to relief.

These days such reporting would bounce Johnson from the *Post*—long before he wrote, "Many people [on welfare] have become accustomed to an animal existence where sexual appetites are gratified with little thought of what will happen to children born out of such circumstances." Johnson and his brethren have since exchanged certain truths about human nature—i.e., that handouts can sometimes make people dependent—for the warmer and more abstract perceptions of the modern Left that we should all "just get along," as he notes in the chapter on race in his book on the 1990s, *Divided We Fall*. Indeed, those liberal bromides are more important than facts to most reporters today. In the passage just quoted, Johnson notes that in 1963 welfare had tripled as the population of Washington had dropped. Who would report the same basic, telling fact today?

He also offers an observation that would now be banished to the nether reaches of the conservative press. He introduces a man who took a lower salary so he could remain on welfare:

He had been defeated long ago; now he only wanted to sit back, watch the television, and let the rest of the world go on its way. His children will probably grow up without placing much value on initiative.... There are children living on [Bates] street today who are learning not only to lie, but to hate. Spawned by a moment of passion, born unwanted into poverty, and branded by society as bastards,

they never will escape the stigma implied in the word "illegitimate." They are being raised in an environment where there is little respect for marriage and the family.

Johnson or, rather, a man he interviews, offers another trenchant take on juvenile crime of the ghetto. What is so fascinating is that the theory is offered by a black policeman, yet when, thirty years later, the identical idea appeared in the *New Republic*, it ignited a firestorm. The man Johnson interviews is described as an older black policeman, and his theory is that juvenile crime was, up in Washington not because of poverty, but affluence. He tells Johnson:

You must remember that the youth today we have trouble with—say from sixteen to twenty years old—are products of World War II. During the war there was plenty of work here and many people had a lot of children. The parents were able to show them some of the luxuries. They had radio and TV and good clothes. They were sent to school. They never faced the problem that we had, as kids of eleven and twelve, of being forced to try and earn a living. So you have groups of young children improperly advised by their parents. Sometimes the blame's on the parents, other times it isn't.

Then, as the economy slackened, the kids still had the desire. They wanted the best. They never were taught that the best isn't for everyone. We were taught as children that certain things were only for the rich. You wouldn't desire more than your income allows you. The kids today desire the best. But their activities at school

and their hours before the TV slow them down. Soon they're getting poor marks; and then they're ready to drop out of school.... Still they want to go to parties and have a big time. At home their parents find their bills are piling up and they can't make it. The next thing you know the kids are snatching pocket books and rifling a cash register. Then two or three of them talk it over and decide to go together and steal. And you'd be surprised what they do with the money. They want to dress nicely.

Simple greed as a motivation for robbery is not often cited. This must be obvious to journalist Joe Klein as, in 1996, Klein penned a scathing review of a book by the black scholar William Julius Wilson. Wilson had, per usual, blamed inner-city crime on poverty, drawing a correlation between the rising crime of the 1960s and fleeing industrial jobs. Klein simply pointed out that perhaps other factors were at work. He noted that Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's report on the devastation caused by the breakup of the black family came out in 1965, when most urban jobs "had not yet fled." Klein then added another thought, directly echoing the black policeman in *Dusk at the Mountain*: "Isn't it possible that this new poverty—the chronic anarchy and dependency that began to manifest itself in the 1960s—is primarily a disease of affluence?" To the inner city poor, Klein wrote, the "voluptuous festival of American excess [that] materialized in the living rooms of slums each night" caused jobs that once provided stability—jobs as janitors and bus drivers—to be 'suddenly derided as 'dead end' [by those] who found it profitable to cultivate the alienation of others." Klein was roundly savaged for offering such an observation—despite the fact that a careful

examination of the 1968 riot reveals that he was right.

Such things are simply not said anymore, no matter how much truth they contain—and for those of us who have honestly researched the 1968 riots that devastated Shaw, they do indeed contain the truth. Every careful blow-by-blow reveals not a group of adults blind with rage over the death of their leader, Dr. King, but packs of roving kids looking to steal and being encouraged by left-wing black radicals. (One black militant told a reporter that they had been planning something since the February before King was killed and that they often instigated rioting in parts of the city where there had been none.) Such reporting did not appear during the Los Angeles riots of 1992, even in editorials.

A few years ago, I wrote a *Washington Post* op-ed arguing that Americans should marshal resources to save the Howard Theatre, an historically black theatre in Shaw that has been shuttered for years. In the piece I noted that the Howard collapsed around the time of "the cultural and moral collapse of the 1960s." After the final edit was done I was casually informed that the line had been changed—from "cultural and moral collapse" to "the social upheavals of the 1960s." More sad than its bald corruption is the ironic possibility that this revisionism hurts the black people liberal journalists are trying to help—or maybe the journalists are simply interested in helping themselves.

The black scholar John McWhorter has rebuked the liberal penchant for obsessing on the horrific aspects of black American history. In an article in *City Journal*, McWhorter notes that many black thinkers today downplay the remarkable progress that has been made since the 1960s, instead "depicting modern black America as a variation on slavery and dismissing the progress we've made since the 1960s by condemning successful

blacks as 'house niggers.' The result: for most of us, black history summons images of endless degradation—slavery, the quick promise of Reconstruction, Plessy vs. Ferguson, the Klan, Lynchings, the beatings of civil rights activists, Dred Scott, Emmett Till.... Not to attend to such things would be folly; but a history only of horrors cannot inspire."

The problem is, in order to inspire, one has to report that there was once a time when, in black communities like Shaw, crime and illegitimacy were low and achievement and pride were high. Yet revealing this truth leads to uncomfortable questions about how this was possible in the high noon of Jim Crow America. This leads to more uncomfortable questions about the liberal premise that poverty, oppression, and crime are coefficients. And most journalists today are just not prepared to ask such questions, which would dramatically challenge their orthodoxies formed in the crucibles of the civil rights movement and Vietnam. Baby boomer journalists tend to see every story through the same self-inflating lens of their 1960s glory days.

In 1994, almost thirty years after the publication of *Dusk at the Mountain*, Johnson published *Divided We Fall: Gambling with History in the Nineties*. The premise of the book was that America is becoming a fragmented country, especially when it comes to race. Yet there is none of the moral toughness of the book Johnson had written as a younger man. There is not even an honest account of crime statistics, which point to a disproportionate rate of crime among black males. "Crime—black on black" in the index leads to a conversation with Hank Sanders, a black man running for Congress. "I was strongly opposed to Clarence Thomas," Sanders tells Johnson. "I feel that it is imperative for those of us who get a break, who get a lift, who get affirmative action either from an institution or from our grand-

parents or our community, to reach back and to pull up folks.... I went on radio and television in strong opposition to Thomas because I was convinced that he wasn't trying to pull a nobody else in, that he was prepared to close the same door that he had walked through." No statistics, no combing the streets for observations from the people, no interview with Clarence Thomas or anyone who may support him. There is, however, this observation by Johnson:

Blacks like Sanders believe they are still treated unfairly by the American judicial system. Not just in the courts, but by the police, the prosecutors, the all-white juries.... They feel that African-Americans bear a special burden. They suffer most at the hands of criminals—from drug dealers to murderers—yet they are lumped in with the criminal class, are branded as dangerous by the white majority merely because of their color. When they do find themselves involved in the justice system, they believe they receive punishment disproportionate to their crimes when compared with whites. In fact, they are right in all these assumptions; being treated fairly has not been the lot of blacks in America, and every thoughtful person knows it.

Here we have a grim example of the sad degeneracy of Johnson's career and of American journalism. Johnson delivers this aria of injustice without citing a single report or quoting a single person who could back it up—never mind anyone who cared to refute it. America and her courts are racists, and Clarence Thomas is a traitor, and that's all there is to it. It's reminiscent of the way my Jesuit-educated Catholic buddies and I used to ridicule fundamentalists—the Bible says

it, they believe it, and that settles it.

Gone is the Johnson of *Dusk at the Mountain*, the man who rued the tragedy of illegitimacy and called black Muslims "racists" and "the black counterpart of the Ku Klux Klan." Gone is the man who would cite Congressional hearings, government reports, statistics, and voices from the neighborhood supporting the facts about black males and crime. In *Divided We Fall*, Al Sharpton is a "provocateur"; in *Dusk at the Mountain* he would have been dismissed as a demagogue. In *Dusk*, Johnson meets a black man who is not impressed with the nascent black Muslim movement. "I've got a white man's name and a white man's culture," the man tells Johnson. "You might even say the white man's attitude. And I'm perfectly satisfied." Would such a man have made it into *Divided We Fall*?

At this point Johnson is probably not honest enough with himself to answer that. It falls to other journalists to recapture the history that is being denied and obscured, and to tell the truth today. As Roger Kimball noted, "Given the spiritual malaise brought on by the long march of America's cultural revolution, we may conclude that the way forward lies not in any sort of new revolution but, on the contrary, in the patient recovery of lost virtues." For journalists, primary among these virtues was the ability to tell the truth even when that truth dismantled sacred orthodoxies. Those orthodoxies, formed during Vietnam and Watergate and now shored up with identity politics, moral relativism, and therapeutic cultural hegemony of the last thirty years have resulted in a profession that is dishonest and corrupt. It has managed, like Haynes Johnson, to grow older yet less wise. ■

Mark Gauvreau Judge is the author of If It Ain't Got That Swing and Damn Senators: My Grandfather and Washington's Championship Season, which will be published next year.

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Man of War

The bellicose Sharon incites anti-Americanism throughout the Mideast.

By Scott McConnell

WE WENT TO PRESS before Israeli prime minister Sharon's scheduled White House visit, and therefore missed the fulsome compliments President Bush will likely bestow upon his guest. Last spring, as Israeli tanks surrounded the Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah and kept most towns on the West Bank locked under 24 hour curfew, the president called Sharon a "man of peace."

Israel's prime minister is a strong military tactician; he might, conceivably, be considered a necessary leader for Israel. But to describe him as a man of peace is a kind of absurdity, shocking in its disregard of the facts. Sharon's record is that of a military commander tugging on the limits of civilian authority to kill as many Arabs as plausible, the armed and the unarmed, the dangerous and the meek. The killing is done in single-minded pursuit of an ideology, a relatively fractional one within Zionism, that holds that Israel is entitled not only to that part of the Palestine Mandate territory given by the United Nations to the Jewish state, but to that part allocated to the indigenous Palestinian Arabs as well.

Though democratic countries often turn to military heroes, it is surprising that Sharon had any kind of political career. He first came to international attention as a young major in 1953, as the commander of an Israeli Defense

Force attack on the Jordanian village of Qibya. The attack was ordered after two Arab infiltrators crossed the armistice line from Jordan and killed an Israeli mother and her children. Jordan immediately denounced the murders and promised full cooperation in tracking down the perpetrators. But Israel's acting defense minister commanded a retaliatory raid by Unit 101, led by Sharon. Oxford's Israeli born historian Avi Shlaim describes the result thus:

Sharon's order was to penetrate Qibya, blow up houses, and inflict heavy casualties on its inhabitants. His success in carrying out the order surpassed all expectations. The full and macabre story of what has happened in Qibya was revealed only during the morning of the attack. The village had been reduced to a pile of rubble: forty-five houses had been blown up, and sixty-nine civilians, two-thirds of them women and children, had been killed. Sharon and his men claimed that they believed that all the inhabitants had run away and that they had no idea that anyone was hiding inside the houses. The UN observer who inspected the scene reached a different conclusion: "One story was repeated time after time: the bullet splintered door, the body

sprawled across the threshold, indicating that the inhabitants had been forced by heavy fire to stay inside until their homes were blown up over them."

Israel initially tried to cover up the massacre. Prime Minister Ben Gurion concocted a tale of Israeli villagers, provoked beyond endurance, seeking revenge and denied official culpability. It didn't fly. Ambassador Abba Eban, entrusted to defend his country's action in the UN, privately lamented that "no other country acts this way." Sharon was pleased however, claiming the operation boosted army morale.

Qibya proved no barrier to Sharon's advancement, either political or military. He led Israel's Southern command in the early 1970's, where he became known for bulldozing Palestinian homes in the Gaza strip and assassinating suspected Arab guerillas.

By 1982, he became minister of defense in Menachem Begin's second government, where he pushed his "big plan" for Lebanon, expanding an incursion against Arab guerrillas in the south of the country into a full fledged military push into its heart. His goal was to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization once and for all, in order to lessen opposition to Israel's absorption of the West Bank. The Lebanon incursion was crowned by large-scale massacres at the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps while they were under Israeli army control. An Israeli commission of inquiry found Sharon responsible for the massacres (carried out by an anti-Palestinian Lebanese Phalangist faction, which Sharon had allowed into the camps) and forced his resignation.

In the late 1980s, Sharon was made housing minister by the Shamir government. He distinguished himself by pushing aggressively to expand Israeli settlements on the West Bank, in order

to create—as he stated openly—irreversible facts on the ground and render a territorial compromise with the Palestinians impossible to achieve.

Sharon's tenure as Israel's prime minister has been exactly what this past might foreshadow. He has pushed the further expansion of settlements in the West Bank—joining them up with roads and infrastructure, while keeping much of the three million Palestinian population bottled up in isolated towns.

He has kept the pot boiling with assassinations and military maneuvers,

HE SOUGHT TO RENDER A **TERRITORIAL COMPROMISE** WITH THE PALESTINIANS. **IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE.**

as if to prevent any meaningful diplomatic activity from getting underway. The patterns are unmistakable. Let there be a lull in Arab terrorist attacks against Israel, the emergence of a significant current of Palestinian opinion condemning terror against civilian targets, a major peace initiative circulating from key Arab states, indeed anything that might portend renewal of serious negotiations, and Sharon will order the assassination of a Palestinian militant or two or send tanks and bulldozers into a Palestinian town. When Palestinian legislators took measures to limit or circumvent Yasser Arafat's power and to make the Palestinian authority more accountable (exactly as the United States had been urging them to do!), Sharon sent his tanks into the West Bank to render meaningful Palestinian political activity impossible.

A few days before coming to Washington, Sharon ordered the IDF to carry out an assault whose consequences for those on the receiving end were indistinguishable from those of a "successful" suicide terror bombing. In what Sharon described as an "anti-terror" offensive, Israel sent tanks and helicop-

ter gunships into the center of Khan Unis, a town in Gaza, and opened fire. Sixteen civilians were killed and one hundred wounded. Israeli troops then machine-gunned the hospital where the wounded were taken. When the Bush administration complained about the use of American-supplied heavy weapons against Palestinian civilian targets, Sharon pronounced himself well pleased with an "important and successful" operation and vowed to do it again.

Sharon is hardly the world's only leader to use ugly tactics in a brutal eth-

nic conflict. He is no worse than Slobodan Milosevic—another democratically elected strongman who played the nationalist card for all it was worth, using the turmoil of terror and counter-terror and unconventional war to advance a strategy of ethnic cleansing.

But it makes one cringe to see the President of the United States embrace him. President Bush obviously does not yet realize it, but Ariel Sharon is not America's friend in the Middle East but one of this country's most severe diplomatic liabilities. As the beneficiary of Washington's lavish military and financial support, Sharon has become a prime purveyor of anti-American sentiment in the Mideast and the wider world, a fat advertisement for all that is short-sighted and fundamentally unbalanced about America's policy. In the struggle now raging across the Arab world between anti-American fundamentalists and those more friendly and open to the West and ready at long last to make peace with Israel, Ariel Sharon is one of the best arguments for the Osama Bin Laden side, the trump card which says no co-existence with the West is possible. ■

Arts & Letters

FILM

[Red Dragon]

Shakespearean or Vulgarian?

By Steve Sailer

LOS ANGELES—The primordial human fear of being eaten has inspired three of Hollywood's all-time most profitable franchises: "Jaws," "Jurassic Park," and the Hannibal the Cannibal series.

Sir Anthony Hopkins returns as Dr. Hannibal Lecter in "Red Dragon," a prequel to 1991's Oscar-sweeping "Silence of the Lambs." It raises the question of whether artistic mediocrity can be morally preferable to artistic brilliance. That's hardly a new controversy—Plato harrumphed about it in "The Republic"—but it's back in the spotlight because this competent but forgettable police procedural seems a lot less likely than the more powerful "Silence" to plant ideas in the heads of real-life psychos.

Structurally, the plot of "Red Dragon" is identical to that of "Silence of the Lambs." A serial killer is running amok, and the FBI is stumped. So, to pick up tips on the criminal mind, a young agent must descend into the dungeon where America's most dangerous prisoner, Dr. Hannibal Lecter, is serving nine consecutive life sentences. There, they commence a battle of wits and wills.

That Hannibal—a character previously burnished by such visionary directors as Michael Mann (1986's "Manhunter"), Ridley Scott (2001's "Hannibal"), and, most of all, Jonathan

Demme ("Silence")—has been sacrilegiously entrusted to the commercially oriented Brett Ratner (director of Jackie Chan's "Rush Hour" comedies) has left numerous critics irate.

Look, guys, it's a cannibal serial killer thriller, for crissakes.

Beyond Ratner's lack of genius, Edward Norton (so good in "American History X") gives a bland performance in what is essentially Jody Foster's Oscar-winning role as the FBI agent. The chemistry between the effete cannibal and the subtly mannish Foster generated a lot of perverse sexual tension. The blondish Norton, who looks like a cross between a Ralph Lauren Polo model and a large chipmunk, plays too much of an Eagle Scout to appear in any danger of being seduced to the dark side.

And the 1,001 television parodies of Hannibal the Cannibal since 1991 means that even though Hopkins gives his considerable all, he can't keep this ridiculous role from drifting into the campiness it deserves.

In the big picture, what's bad about "Red Dragon" is good for society. I know of no evidence that "Silence of the Lambs" launched any member of the lunatic fringe on a murderous career, but that would hardly be implausible. Great actors and directors have the ability to set sickos off. Foster's performance in Martin Scorsese's tremendous "Taxi Driver" inspired a vile creep to shoot the president of the United States. Similarly, Salon.com reported that 15 murders have been committed by vermin who afterwards bragged that they were inspired by Oliver Stone's technically stunning but depraved 1994 film "Natural Born Killers."

Sir Anthony's performance shows how actors trained in the British stage tradition can go on playing ultra-theatri-

cal concoctions like Hannibal the Cannibal into their dotage. The British see the craft of acting as mastering time-tested techniques for presenting a brilliant façade. Hopkins understudied for Sir Laurence Olivier, who claimed he never understood a character until he found the right hat to wear.

In contrast, American Method actors view the art of acting as fully taking on a new character's body and emotions, although not his brains. The British style is best for impossibly articulate roles such as Hamlet or Hannibal Lecter. The Method school shines at portraying mumblers and morons. Think of Robert De Niro adding 60 pounds and banging his head against the wall at the end of "Raging Bull."

At 59, De Niro no longer looks up to the huge physical demands of his chosen approach. In contrast, Hopkins is 64. In last summer's action dud "Bad Company," Sir Anthony was so dead on his feet that he got out-acted by comedian Chris Rock, who might be the worst actor of any movie star. Hopkins, though, can still dazzle as Hannibal Lecter because he has his old bag of tricks, such as never blinking, and can keep adding new ones.

Sir Anthony is not completely the master of technique. He drags his Welsh accent everywhere (including, ludicrously, his title performance in Stone's "Nixon"). Americans, though, can't tell a Welsh accent from an upper-crust English one, so they find Hannibal the epitome of class.

Which is pretty funny because Hopkins is an outspoken vulgarian. Although once penciled in as the next Olivier, he abandoned Britain for the simple pleasures of big dumb Hollywood movies and roaring around the wide-open spaces of the United States in an American muscle car. "I have no

interest in Shakespeare and all that British nonsense ... I just wanted to get famous, and all the rest is hogwash," he said.

Sir Anthony became an American citizen in 2000. ■

Rated R for violence, grisly images, language, some nudity and sexuality. Please don't take your kids.

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BOOKS

[Robert Nisbet: *Communitarian Traditionalist*, Brad Lowell Stone, 151 Books, 170 pages]

Putting Communities First

By Joe Scotchie

ROBERT NISBET'S 1953 classic, *The Quest for Community* was published at a most opportune time. The postwar American landscape was changing dramatically. While pre-1940 America held a decent balance between a rural, small town culture and vibrant but livable big cities, a new world was coming of age in the 1950s. Artificial suburban housing tracts were being rapidly built all across the country. The G.I. Bill led to an explosion of both college students and eventually, college graduates, themselves soon to be members of a contented middle class. The American economy dominated the world scene in an unprecedented manner. Even blue-collar workers could now flee the cities and live in the suburbs. But could real communities exist in these new conditions? After the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, a tragedy that took place in an affluent Denver suburb, many somber observers began to ask similar ques-

tions. Running alongside American mobility is Robert Nisbet's insistence that a viable community life is more important than mere material things or individual fulfillment.

Prior to the publicity *The Quest for Community* received, Nisbet did not consider himself to be a conservative. He did not object, however, when critics pinned that label on him. Also in the 1950s, Nisbet read Russell Kirk's opus, *The Conservative Mind*, an experience that convinced him that being on the Right was not such a bad place to do battle from.

Brad Lowell Stone's critical study is the first full-length book on a man long recognized as one of the postwar Right's premier thinkers. The subtitle, in particular, gets to the heart of Nisbet's worldview. Some of the prose gets bogged down in academic jargon; otherwise, the book is a fine introduction to a sociologist who wrote as he pleased and cared little what the consequences of his opinions might be.

Although Nisbet never shied away from offending the gods of received wisdom, his own career, interestingly enough, never suffered for his reactionary views. He taught for many years at the University of California before ending his teaching days at Columbia University. In New York, he became friends with Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz, while also writing for *National Review* and eventually receiving the Rockford Institute's Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters. By the 1980s, Nisbet was probably the only conservative who was welcomed into the world of not only Kristol and Podhoretz, but also that of writers as different as William F. Buckley Jr. and Thomas Fleming. Perhaps his friendship with the neoconservatives and the Buckleyites spared him the fate suffered by numerous Old Rightists. Nisbet, to say the least, was no fan of an American empire. Yet, the man was a survivor.

Russell Kirk, like other traditionalists, tended to celebrate the organic nature of community life. Nisbet, on the other

hand, was committed to exploring the political causes of social dislocation. Throughout his career, Nisbet criticized, often in strong language, modern-day libertarians. Unlike Frank S. Meyer, he saw little hope for a coalition between libertarians and traditionalists. Still, Nisbet had plenty in common with more responsible libertarians. Namely, he was a thorough critic of the modern state, its current day workings, and the men who helped to create the leviathan against which conservatives struggle.

Do conservatives really want "limited government"? If so, then according to Nisbet, they first ought to join the anti-war party. Agreeing with Randolph Bourne, war, Nisbet correctly noted, is "the health of the state." War feeds the state, creating bureaucracies that are not repealed once the shooting stops. War also creates its own sense of community. The public, understandably enough, rallies around the flag in time of war, not realizing that they are also cheering on a huge expansion of the size and power of the centralized state. In recent American history, the main villain in Nisbet's eyes was Woodrow Wilson. Standing for re-election in 1916, Wilson promised to keep America out of World War I. Once re-elected, Wilson could not resist the war drums. More than that, Wilson's Washington created huge bureaucracies, most of which would serve as the model for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, an experiment in social engineering that was once the sworn enemy of the American Right. In addition, Wilson's wartime government came close to being a police state. Civil liberties faced their greatest threat in decades.

Consequences of state power included the rise of a judicial tyranny, most notably in the form of school bus-ing orders, themselves, along with urban renewal projects, largely responsible for a new round of massive working-class and middle-class flight from fairly stable urban neighborhoods to the suburbs. Nisbet's critique of the state extended into the realm of economics. Falling wages for male work-

ers, the most significant economic phenomenon of the past 30 years, has also wreaked havoc on family life in America. Always willing to be politically incorrect, Nisbet blasted feminism as the most revolutionary—and destructive—force in our lifetime. Not only was the “ancient role of the sexes” torn asunder, male workers now faced stiff competition in the workforce, not to mention in undergraduate and graduate school admission contests. Stone lists the baby boom population and massive immigration as other factors for male wage decline. Nisbet, as far as I know, never addressed the immigration crisis. Robert Bellah, another important sociologist who was a contemporary of Nisbet, blamed, in part, the loss of manufacturing jobs for plunging wages. Nisbet disagreed, and the author sides with his subject. True, the American economy continued to create millions of jobs even during a time of deindustrialization, but the loss of good-paying

jobs has played its own significant role in this age of wage decline. One does not have to be a statist to see that.

In all, Nisbet opted to take the long view of things, preferring the communitarian vision articulated by Aristotle, Edmund Burke, and Alexis de Tocqueville over the state worship hinted at by Plato and embraced more fully by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the fanatics who fueled the French Revolution. In fact, opposition to that bloody uprising is where, in Nisbet's view, modern conservatism began. Like many traditionalists, Nisbet saw many splendid lessons to be learned from the Middle Ages, especially that era's desire to place the health of the community above the whims of the individual. More specifically, such social inventions as the “manor, fief, guild, university [and] parish” appealed to Nisbet. He was not attempting to turn back the clock. As with any great scholar, he only sought what was useful from the past and how

those lessons could be applied to the present.

Nisbet did not offer much in the way of policy prescriptions for the nation's social ills. He did, however, see cause for optimism in the American people's increasing disbelief that mere politics could save their country. For Nisbet, this was complimented by the hope that a religious revival might yet sweep the Western world, with America as the most Christian of the Western nations, leading the way. The twentieth century was a time when the state, in all its bloody excesses, triumphed. Will the new century see the return of an older, more modest faith? Time will tell if Nisbet's cautious optimism was warranted. In the meantime, thanks to this book, Nisbet's popularity among younger conservatives should continue to grow. ■

Joe Scotchie's most recent book is Revolt from the Heartland: The Struggle for an Authentic Conservatism (Transaction).

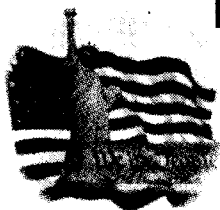
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[*America's Second Civil War: Dispatches from the Political Center*, Stanley A. Renshon, Transaction, 358 pages]

Civil War, Ready or Not

By Chilton Williamson Jr.

TO COMPREHEND the burden of conceptual confusion with which Stanley Renshon's book is handicapped, only imagine a hypothetical volume appearing in, say, July 1863, under the title *The American Civil War; Or, Dispatches from the Political Center*. Since a country in the throes of civil war has, by definition, no political center, reviewers and readers alike might be perplexed regarding the identity of this locus. Washington, D.C. or Richmond, Va.? The Mason and Dixon Line? Gettysburg, Penn., where a major battle had recently been fought? The title would seem to them an oxymoron, or simply a meaningless string of words.

Renshon, in his actual book, attempts a clear definition that unfortunately fails to identify: "The political center is the Holy Grail of American politics, the Archimedean point at which North/South/East/and West, men and women, urban and suburban, left and right, race and ethnicity are in harmonious political balance." This definition, which appears to apprehend the Music of the Spheres rather than any identifiable political position, is not clarified by Renshon's further observation that, "the political center is primarily cultural." Nor is it clarified by anything else Renshon has to say on the subject, probably for the reason that Renshon does not want clarification. Of course civil war affords no political center, but that doesn't prevent prudent people of a certain type from trying to hide out at it anyway. Political labels are of no great use today, but if forced to identify Stanley Renshon one way or another, I would call him a recovering

liberal leaning toward conservatism (lower-case "c"). That is a more conservative position than many avowed "Conservatives" adhere to today. Renshon, a certified psychoanalyst, ought to be at least as honest with himself as presumably he expects his patients to be with him.

This lack of authorial candor is a pity: The Second Civil War absolutely is under way, yet Renshon's unwillingness to declare sides necessarily prevents him from grasping its essential nature and meaning. Perhaps for similar reasons, his understanding of the Civil War, which he thinks was fought to decide whether the United States could have a common future without a common culture, is flat-out wrong (but that is another story). "Now," he writes, "for the second time in its history, America faces a real question of how to maintain a stable and effective relationship between its *unum* and *pluribus*.... [T]he new danger lies in conflicts among people of different racial, cultural, and ethnic heritages, and between those who view themselves as socially, culturally, politically, and economically disadvantaged and those whom they see as privileged.... Unlike the first Civil War, the antagonists cannot take for granted, nor take refuge in, the primary institutions in their parts of the country, such as family, or religious, social, cultural, or political organizations. These are precisely the places where the conflicts are being fought." The result is, "America's unfolding basic public dilemma [has become] our increasing diversity and how we [will] handle it."

Renshon is basically sound on the immigration issue, suggesting that multicultural and ethnic diversity can easily lead to "a fragmented and dysfunctional national identity," criticizing the federal government's leniency in permitting immigrants (and others) to enjoy dual citizenship, and insisting that the paramount concern raised by mass immigration ought not to be the good of the immigrants themselves or the "needs" of the businesses that employ (some) of them, but the effect several million

immigrants arriving each year can be expected to have on our cultural and political institutions. Precisely because America is fragmented, confused, resentful, and angry to an extent unprecedented in its history, thirteen million legal immigrants accepted into the U.S., in the course of a decade and from dozens of exotic societies around the world, can only aggravate further the process of destabilization in a country that cannot make up its mind whether to expect assimilation or not. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Nathan Glazer argued in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, published more than three decades ago, that what Michael Novak called the "unmeltable ethnics," all of them of European extraction, assimilated only imperfectly and, to that extent, resentfully to WASP America in an era in which the need for assimilation was taken for granted. (I made the same point in my book, *The Immigration Mystique: America's False Conscience*.) Stanley Renshon, by contrast, takes the more conventional position in stating that until recently, with the exception of the Civil War period, "America was able to take a coherent national culture and identity for granted." At issue today, he believes, is not whether America should have a dominant culture but rather a primary one. The prospects for even that much he appears to find increasingly dim.

Immigration, diversity, and multiculturalism are not, however, really the American dilemma itself but only pawns in what we call the cultural war, though actually it is a metaphysical engagement. Renshon notes that "primary conflicts" are less the result of disagreements on "facts" and particular policies than they are "a product of fundamentally different views of America." Here Renshon might have paused to note that one of these "different views" is a deliberate dishonest construct, amounting to a fantastical lie or lying fantasy worthy of the Prince of Lies himself. Instead, he goes on to observe, accurately, that, "At issue is whether it is possible or desirable to preserve the

strengths of a common heritage in the face of insistence from some quarters that our past has resulted in a culture worth tearing down to build over, rather than one worth keeping and building on. The basic conflict is over the viability of American culture and identity itself." But Renshon fails to add that for "American identity" we can read "Western identity," and for "Western identity," "human identity." Stanley Renshon says he got started on this project while writing a book on the Clinton presidency. Doubtless he is familiar with Mrs. Clinton's expressed ambition to "redefine what it means to be a human being in the twenty-first century." Or if he is not he should be, since the reinvention of humanity is finally what the Second Civil War is being fought over, not whether future American presidents will assume what Renshon calls a "heroic" or "reflective" role in office.

Another way of saying it is that on one side of the battle line stands the party that has adopted the restructuring of reality as its great cause and project, on the other the one that has chosen to oppose the desacralization of the universe and the dehumanization of man. Renshon himself provides plenty of statistical evidence for the nature of the division, most of it drawn from post-election data gleaned from the 2000 presidential vote and showing conclusively that Al Gore was the candidate of secularists, "intellectuals," media people, enthusiasts for gay rights, abortion, and euthanasia, environmentalists, and other deconstructionist elements; George Bush the choice of religious believers and church-goers, enemies of abortion, gay rights, and other "alternative life-styles," Middle Americans, and social conservatives generally. Terry Teachout has suggested "Democratic Nation" and "Republican Nation" as appropriate designations connoting the opposed parties. "Nation of Rebellion" and "Nation of Acceptance" better suggest the fierceness of that opposition, as well as the breadth and depth of the gulf stretching between the two forces,

which in any case are not strictly separated by party lines.

One way or another, the Second Civil War is a reality, not a journalistic metaphor, and it can only be expected to intensify in the coming years. As in every civil war, everyone will have to choose his side eventually, Renshon included. Which side he will end up on seems fairly predictable. For now, it is encouraging to know that someone who considers himself a centrist could have written this book. Given enough of him, perhaps in the crisis the Nation of Acceptance will have a chance at prevailing, after all. ■

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[Slander: Liberal Lies About the American Right; Ann Coulter, Crown Publishers, 256 pages]

Breaking the Code

By Janet Scott Barlow

WITH *SLANDER: LIBERAL Lies About the American Right*, Ann Coulter has written a funny book—which is in no way to suggest she has produced an unserious book. Coulter's purpose here is to expose, document, enumerate, and analyze the many sources and forms of the Left's political lies.

Her central method in this task is to record, over and over and over again, *what liberals actually say*. And while individual examples may be hilarious (Bryant Gumbel to *Playboy* publisher Hugh Hefner in an interview during the 2000 presidential race: "In a macropolitical sense, do you think the Gore preoccupation with morality is a frightening turn for the party?"), the cumulative effect is deadly.

Ann Coulter has broken the code in

dealing with typical liberal tactics, which consist mainly of labeling conservatives "dangerous," "stupid," or "mean." The standard liberal technique, she writes, comes down to this: "Always advance as if under threat of attack." Coulter herself advances by aggressively rejecting the Left's labels (along with the defensiveness that can accompany being their object), then tenaciously scrutinizing the facts, the record, and the documented observations of selected liberals, Democrats, and lefties. Finally, she follows up with the one-two punch of applied logic and intellectual rigor. What Ann Coulter does in *Slander* is, in fact, hard work; and her ability to make it look easy suggests a high-energy sense of mental order.

Coulter's talents merge to perfection in a chapter exploring what she calls "the apocryphal 'religious right.'" In total, this exploration is a marvel: informative, persuasive, entertaining. Coulter's contention is that the term "Religious Right" is useless in an objective sense (the Religious Right, she points out, is not an organization, has no members, and is not, if white Christians are the measure, a predictable voting bloc), yet powerful as a negative political weapon. ("Religious Right" generally serves not as a description but as a slur.) And because liberals, especially in the media, both hate and need the Religious Right, they are forever predicting the rise of its influence and the decline of its power. The innumerable contradictions and inconsistencies Coulter unearths on this subject are both comical and outrageous.

Near the conclusion of *Slander*, Ann Coulter lists a series of conservative ideas and accomplishments that are "changing the world," among them: school vouchers, welfare reform, the Strategic Defense Initiative, and winning the Cold War. I would add one item to her list. Although I am not sure it is (yet) changing the world, conservatives also have accomplished this: In the past two decades or so, they have altered conventional wisdom—the gen-



Which Will It Be?

MICHAEL NEW WAS RIGHT ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS:

**"They have a constitution (charter); they have a head of state;
they have a legislature; they have a world court;
in fact, they have everything they need for a world government
except world taxes (they're working on that)
and a world army—and that's what they want to make me."**

**As we lose our sovereignty by degrees,
important decisions are being made for us by a motley collection
of Marxists, utopians, social engineers and greedy third world dictators,
whose collective agenda is to destroy
all private property and redistribute your wealth.**

Declare your community a UN-free Zone now.

Maybe that's a message your congressman
can understand.

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eral public perception—of what Coulter calls “the monopoly media” (television, newspapers, and magazines). What was once accepted as a trustworthy source of information is now largely viewed as a vehicle that serves the political ideology of journalists. This shift in perception is a huge and significant accomplishment, and it has been achieved by methods Coulter herself employs: the use of hard facts and numbers, the application of objective standards, and dogged repetition of the obvious. And this brings us to what *Slander*, for all its insights, overlooks.

So fixated is Ann Coulter on the product (the media) that she seems to have forgotten the role—and the power—of the consumer. “The wildly disproportionate percentage of liberals in the media is not an insignificant point,” she writes. “The media determine how the news will be served up, how the players are characterized, what news to report, and what news not to report. The same clichés, biases, and outright lies are constantly reinforced through the media sound chamber.”

But the assumption of “constant reinforcement” remains accurate only as long as the audience’s powers of discernment remain static. And these days, the discernment of news audiences is anything but static. News consumers are becoming more skeptical and sophisticated by the month—and they revel in their insider savvy. This shift in consumer awareness—which, again, is the result of years of conservative grunt work—does not change the fact of media bias. But it does, inevitably and without question, diminish the media’s power to influence an audience. The days of journalism as a priesthood are over—except, of course, in the minds of journalists. But that’s the point, isn’t it? They have become notorious for being behind the curve.

Enhanced consumer awareness also diminishes, as it turns out, the dominant media’s power to attract an audience. Many daily newspapers are experiencing a drop in readership. And ratings for the big three evening newscasts have

for years been in steady decline. So the question becomes one of elementary (idea) marketing: If you can’t manage to draw an audience, how can you possibly influence an audience?

And then there is the issue of the political consumer. In *Slander*, Coulter seems most deeply offended by the Left’s mean-spirited and chicken-hearted reliance on invective and name-calling (although it should be pointed out that Coulter herself makes selective use of “dimwit,” “half-wit,” and “bird-brain”). She sees the insults—the knee-jerk hurling of “stupid” and “dumb”—as “part of the larger liberal tactic of refusing to engage ideas.”

In a chapter titled “The Joy of Arguing With Liberals: You’re Stupid!” Coulter exhaustively catalogs the many times and ways in which members of the elite media said or implied that Ronald Reagan was some version of “stupid.” She goes on to catalog, almost as exhaustively, the times and ways in which members of the elite media have said or implied that George W. Bush is some version of “stupid.” Her point is that “constant liberal browbeating demonstrably can persuade large numbers of people that Republicans are dumb, irrespective of cold, hard facts.” That is the beauty, she states, of controlling “all major sources of news dissemination.”

While I share Coulter’s indignation, I cannot share her conclusion. How successful could the Left’s Reagan-is-dumb propaganda have been if, as Coulter herself points out, Reagan won re-election by carrying 49 states, resulting in the largest electoral college landslide in history?

Ann Coulter is insulted by the intellectual arrogance of the Left’s refusal to engage ideas; and, of course, she is right. She is right again when she says the result of the Left’s tactics is nasty politics and despoiled political debate—all of which can be tiresome and dispiriting. But is it a threat? Can it really be a problem that some voters are being forced to become more resourceful and selective political consumers? Is it in any way ominous that other voters are

turning a deaf ear to the yammering altogether and deciding simply to trust their own instincts? If this is what the Left’s retreat from genuine debate has wrought, I’ll take it. No, it isn’t pretty; but it does suggest a stubborn autonomy within the body politic.

The dominant media’s resistance over the years to objective reporting of conservative ideas, policies, and candidates has been neither enjoyable nor fair. But it has been useful. In order to get themselves heard, conservatives have combined energy with intellectual cogency, and they have maintained trust in that combination. With the media stacked against them, they have developed creative political strategies and have applied patience and perseverance to the execution of those strategies. They have seized opportunities where they could find them, and when they could not find them, they have created their own. And by all appearances, they have had a good time in the process.

Liberals, by contrast, have been ill-served by their free media ride. As a group, they have become intellectually lazy, politically sloppy, and morally indecisive. As Ann Coulter sums it up: “Bereft of winning issues, persuasive arguments, or real ideas, liberals are bitter.”

Bitter. Aside from its other negatives, bitterness is a real loser politically. How can you consistently attract voters when you are more obsessed with your opponents’ ideas than you are excited your own? How can you exhibit the joy of political and intellectual debate that a free country allows if you are consumed by the assumption that debate is beneath you and victory is no less than you deserve?

Bitter people don’t have any fun. Ann Coulter, on the other hand, does and in the process has written a consequential book. ■

Janet Scott Barlow is a regular contributor to Chronicles magazine and is the author of The Nonpatriotic President: A Survey of the Clinton Years (Chronicles Press).

So Much for Empires

Here is the celebrated historian Victor Davis Hanson writing in *National Review* on September 30, 2002: "Herodotus wrote that it was easier to convince thousands of free Athenians than a few skeptical Spartan oligarchs

to go to war. In fact, consensual governments have never been averse to fighting—read Thucydides' account of how the frenzied Athenian assembly insisted that their generals invade Sicily."

Well, yes and no. Although I hate to go up against a historian like Hanson (Journalists are easy to argue with because they're lazy and mostly ignorant; students, of course, are the easiest because they know squat) in this case I think he's being selective, to say the least. Twisting history to fit the debate is a very old ploy. In fact it's as old as the Peloponnesian War. And I'm not condemning Hanson for doing it, just countering his argument. After all, history is subjective, and is there for any of us to interpret any way that suits us.

Hanson writes that we associate democracies with peace and therefore think that it is hard to convince thousands of free citizens to support a war. This is a real stretch. In reality, an aroused citizenry usually forces governments to fight.

Athens was an empire, with a formidable fleet, with settlements near Troy at the mouth of Hellespont (South-Russian grain came through there). There was naval imperialism but for reasons of economic necessity. Weak islands paid Athens for protection from pirates and Persians and tribute for being under the Athenian wing. Punishment for, say, independence, was quick and merciless. So much for Athenian democracy for weaker islands or states.

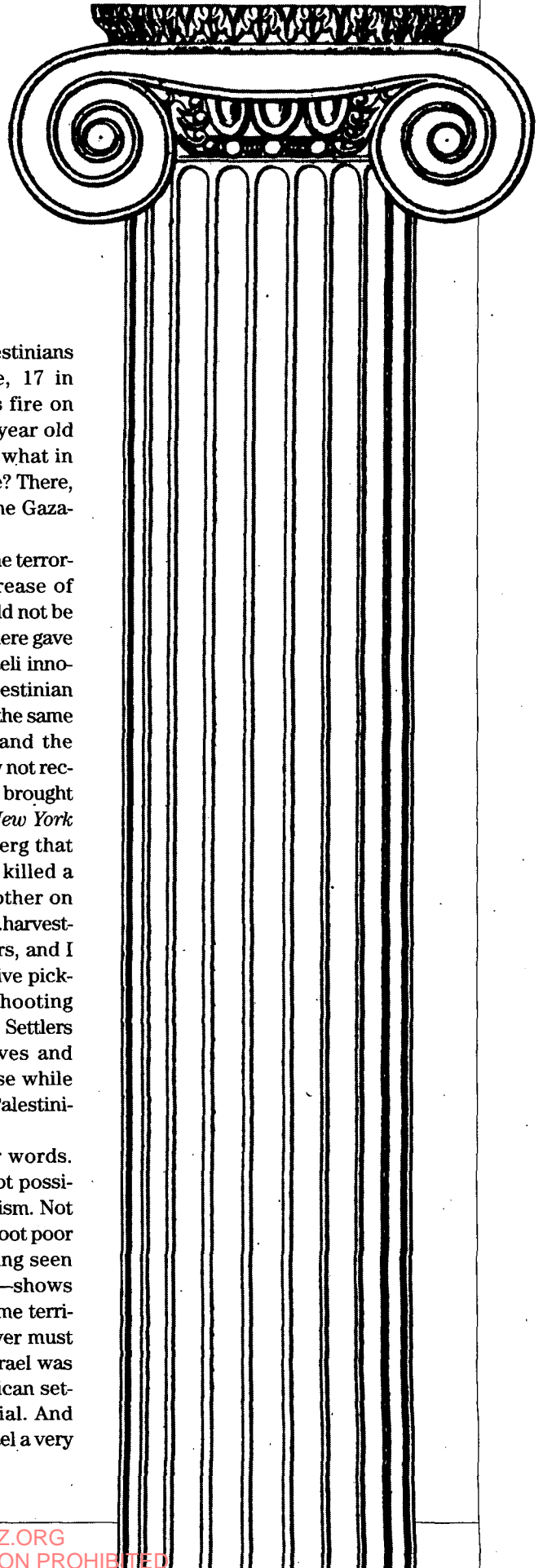
Athens in the beginning of the fifth century B.C. had all the advantages and none of the disadvantages of Sparta, her great rival and eventual conqueror. Sparta was a martial society, which did away with any sickly child at birth. Spartans were always either training for war or at war. The mother of a Spartan always handed her son's shield to him with the words "*Ei tan, ei epi tas*,"—"Come back with it, or on it." Sparta, however, did not seek an empire. The reason for this was not altruistic, but because Sparta had, like the rest of the Greek city states, a large population of slaves, more so than any other state. In fact, their sheer numbers made it impossible for Sparta to wage war in far away places. Spartan slaves closely resembled medieval serfs; they were freer than the slaves of other Greek states who were mostly foreign, were of a wide racial mix, and did not have a common language to articulate opposition. Spartan slaves came from a single nationality, Messenians, spoke Greek (Messenia was next door to Sparta, and today one can drive there in less than an hour), and were known to rise up when the opportunity arose, pun intended.

The Peloponnesian War was among the great tragedies of history. The fall of Athens signaled the end of progress, and Greece's contribution to the world was checked and soon ended. Athenian democracy was not as selective as people now claim. Leaders were chosen by

lot or through acclaim by the people. Athenian democracy in the fifth century was closer to American democracy today than the latter is to the original system following the Revolutionary War.

Athens also had the greatest propagandists of the era, the Bill Kristols of the time. By Kristolizing the populace, Athens was able to justify coercion of islands (Cimon claimed that he had discovered the bones of the mythical Theseus in Scyros) and spread the image of the city as universal benefactor of mankind. Now, dear readers, if this reminds you of a certain campaign going on in this country at present, it is simply a coincidence. Sparta attacked Athens in 431 B.C. because the latter had spread her wings too far. As unwilling as Sparta was to lead the Greek world, she at the same time knew that her time would come eventually to become an Athenian colony. Sparta leads, was the motto, but never follows.

But back to Victor Davis Hanson's theory. Pericles, the greatest of all Athenian leaders, had an obsession with security. (Like President George W. Bush, for example.) It was this obsession that led such a wise man to make Athens almost too strong, raising fears among the rest of the Greeks. After his death from the plague, his ward (and a student of Socrates) Alcibiades, managed to really screw things up. When Hanson claims that according to Thucydides a frenzied Athenian assembly demanded that the generals invade Sicily, both he and Thucydides are half right. Alcibiades, the greatest charmer to have existed, had totally Kristolized the assembly through spin, charm, and



guile. ("To Kristol" is a verb that means to lead astray.) He was also not confined by facts. Despite General Nicaias's protests, the fleet was sent to Syracuse, only to be annihilated and Nicaias to be put to death. It's as if Colin Powell was forced back in uniform despite his protests for a wider war, and once defeated, put to death while Wolfowitz and Kristol flee to Iran, where the mul-lahs are more than happy to give them an advisory position.

Obviously it is I who am now stretching the point. The victorious Spartans did not enjoy their victory for long. The liberation of Greece from Athens, which Sparta's allies required of her, eventually saw Sparta conquered by Thebes, which later fell to the Macedonian father and son team of Philip and Alexander the Great. So much for empires.

An awakened citizenry did not force Rome to spread herself thin; the greed of her elite did. Not many Frenchmen demanded conquest through war; Napoleon decided it was his destiny, and he had six long years to think about it in St Helena. Kipling did his best to rally the people during the time of the British Empire, but it was the East India Company and the arms industry which called the tune. Now it's our turn. The oil companies want it, the Israeli Lobby wants it, and the Bill Kristols of this world want it. We will definitely win the war, but I'm willing to bet my last devalued Euro that we will never win the peace. I've read too much history to fall for this one.

■

Taken at random last week alone, it sounds like swatting flies: the death of

Palestinians, that is. Two Palestinians here, ten Palestinians there, 17 in Nablus while Israeli soldiers fire on stone-throwing youths. A 12-year old boy here, a 3-year old there, what in Heaven's name is going on here? There, rather. A ten-year old girl in the Gaza-Egypt border....

One begins to wonder who the terrorists are. This significant increase of Palestinian civilian deaths would not be as disturbing if the media over here gave them the kind of coverage Israeli innocent deaths are accorded. Palestinian mothers cry and suffer exactly the same pain as Israeli mothers do, and the American press shames itself by not recognizing this simple fact. What brought tears to my wife's eyes was a *New York Times* report by Joel Greenberg that Jewish settlers had shot and killed a Palestinian and wounded another on October 6 in the West Bank for...harvesting olives near Nablus. Settlers, and I quote, "tried to disperse the olive pickers and opened fire, fatally shooting Hani Yusuf, 24, in the stomach. Settlers had entered Palestinian groves and picked their olives, in one case while soldiers prevented villagers [Palestinians] from approaching."

This is too outrageous for words. Picking your own olives cannot possibly be misinterpreted as terrorism. Not even in Sharon's eyes. But to shoot poor people harvesting—after having seen their olives filched by others—shows the settlers to have learned some terrible lessons. Jews the world over must be appalled. This is not why Israel was established. The mostly American settlers should be brought to trial. And condemned. They're giving Israel a very bad name. ■

Can the World's Largest Debtor Long Remain a Global Superpower?

Since the 1980s, America has earned less than it spends. At first, the difference was made up by drawing down national savings. Once our savings were depleted, America relied on foreign borrowing. This process shifted the United States from being the world's largest creditor to being the world's largest debtor.

Today, the U. S. owes \$2.5 trillion more to foreign creditors than they owe to us, and this debt promises to grow much larger rapidly unless present U.S. policies are changed.

As this debt rises, so too does the cost of servicing it. More important, America is increasingly dependent on others to finance an economy that continues to produce far less than it consumes.

And even for America, ultimately there are limits to how much it can borrow from the rest of the world.

The source of America's foreign debt is its trade deficit.

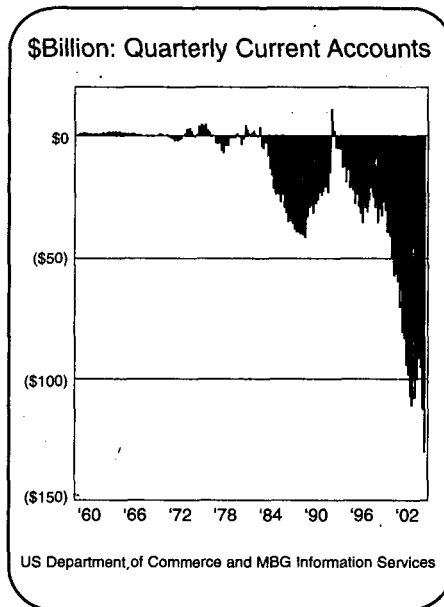
Every day, seven days a week, America imports \$1.3 billion more in goods, services and other current accounts than it exports. Of this, the trade deficit in manufactured goods is by far the largest part, exceeding \$1 billion every day.

The solution to America's worsening foreign debt is to eliminate this trade deficit. And the best way to do this is not by lowering our living standard but by expanding our domestic manufacturing base.

Then, once again, we can earn at least as much as we spend, and we can produce at least as much as we consume.

We think manufacturing in America matters.

What do you think?



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